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THE TOLL-GATE.

After C. Cooper Henderson.

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THE OXFORD, GLOUCESTER AND MILFORD HAVEN ROAD

THE READY WAY TO SOUTH WALES

By CHARLES G. HARPER

Author of "*The Brighton Road*," "*The Portsmouth Road*," "*The Dover Road*," "*The Bath Road*," "*The Exeter Road*," "*The Great North Road*," "*The Norwich Road*," "*The Holyhead Road*," "*The Cambridge, Ely, and King's Lynn Road*," "*The Newmarket, Bury, and Cromer Road*," "*Stage-Coach and Mail in Days of Yore*," "*The Ingoldsby Country*," "*The Hardy Country*," *etc.*

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Illustrated by the Author, and from Old-Time Prints and Pictures.

Vol. II.—GLOUCESTER TO MILFORD HAVEN.

LONDON: CHAPMAN & HALL LTD. 1905

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THE OXFORD, GLOUCESTER, AND MILFORD HAVEN ROAD

Gloucester to Milford Haven

	MILES
Gloucester	104¼
Over	105¼
Highnam	106½
Birdwood	109¾
Huntley	111½
May Hill	112½
Longhope Cross	113½
The Lea	115¼
Weston-under-Penyard	117¼
Ross (Market House)	119¼
(Cross River Wye)	
Wilton	120¼
Upper Wear	121
Lower Wear	121½
Pencraig	123
Goodrich Cross	124¼
Old Forge	124½
(Cross River Garan)	
Whitchurch	125¾
Ganarew	126¾
Dixton	128¾
Monmouth (Shire Hall)	129¾
(Cross River Monnow)	

	MILES
Jingle Street	131
Wonastow	131¾
Dingestow	133¾
(Cross River Trothy)	
Tregare	136½
Bryngwyn	138½
Rhyd-y-Gravel	141
Llanvihangel-nigh-Usk	142
Llangattock-nigh-Usk	142¾
Penpergwm Station	144
Abergavenny	146¾
Llanwenarth-citra-Usk	149
Llangrwyney	151
(Cross River Grwyney)	
Crickhowell	152¾
Glan Nant	154¾
Bwlch	158¼
Llansaintffraed	160½
Scethrog	162¼
Llanhamlach	163½
Millbank	164
Brecon (Town Hall)	166¾
(Cross River Usk)	
St. Davids	167¼
Llanspyddid	169
Penpont (Capel Bettws)	171¾
Nantygwreiddyn	173
Rhyd-y-Briw, or Sennybridge. Devynock Station	175
(Cross River Senni)	
(Cross River Usk)	
Trecastle	177½
Llywel	178½
Halfway : Cwm Dwr	181¾

	MILES
Velindre	186
(Cross River Bran)	
Llandovery	187½
(Cross River Towy)	
Llanwrda	193¾
Abermarlais	195
Manordilo, or Cledvulch	198¼
Rhôsmaen	200
Llandilo	200½
(Cross River Towy)	
Golden Grove	203¼
Llanvihangel Aberbythych	204½
Llanarthney	208
Bremendâ	209
Capel Dewi Isaf	212
Llangunnor	215
(Cross River Towy)	
Carmarthen (Town Hall)	216

The "Upper Road," Llandilo to Carmarthen

Llandilo	200½
Broadoak	204¼
Cothybridge	209¼
Nantgareddig	210½
Abergwili	213¼
Carmarthen (Town Hall)	215¾

Johnstown	217
Sarnau Station	221
Banc-y-Felin	222
Llanvihangel Abercowin	225¼
(Cross River Dewi Fawr)	

	MILES
St. Clears ("Blue Boar")	226
(Cross River Gynin)	
Llandowror	228
Tavernspite	233
Prince's Gate	236
Cold Blow	237
Narberth	238¾
(Cross River Abercowin)	
Robeston Wathen	240½
Canaston Bridge	241¾
(Cross East Cleddau River)	
Slebech Church	244¼
Arnold's Hill	245¾
Deeplake	246½
Scurry Hill	248½
(Cross West Cleddau River)	
Haverfordwest	249¾
Merlin's Bridge	250½
(Cross West Cleddau River)	
Johnston	253½
Steynton	255
Old Milford (Post Office)	256½

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I

Had we been travellers to Gloucester by mail, in the old days of coaching, we should have been driven, in dashing style, up to the door of the "Bell" inn, a hostelry which, not so greatly changed, still stands in Southgate Street, just beyond the Cross, and forms, with the neighbouring old houses and the church of St. Mary de Crypt, a not unpicturesque grouping. The "Bell" is a house something beyond the common, for it is named in "Tom Jones," and Smollett makes a passing allusion to it; while, had it kept visitors' books in the old days, they would be found filled with the signatures of very high and mighty personages indeed. But the greatest interest of the "Bell" is that it was the birthplace, December 16th, 1714, of George Whitefield, sixth and youngest

child of Thomas and Elizabeth Whitefield, the landlord and landlady. That strenuous tub-thumping preacher of the eighteenth century found grace and was converted through his acquaintance with Charles Wesley, in 1735. Ordained to the Church of England, he preached his ordination sermon in this very church of St. Mary de Crypt, a few doors only from his birthplace, and—scandalous fellow that he was!—drove fifteen persons in that respectable congregation mad about the condition of their souls—a shameful thing to do, and properly reported to his diocesan, who ineffectually strove to curb him, but at the same time "hoped that the madness might not be forgotten by the next Sunday."

Good gracious! what would become of our appetite for Sunday dinner—and, incidentally, what would become of the Church of England—if all her ministers displayed the self-same ill-advised anxiety about the spiritual condition of their congregations, who, it is well known and tacitly acknowledged, are safe, spiritually speaking, so long as they attend church every Sunday and put a sixpence in the collecting-bag?

But Whitefield was very much in earnest—it was throughout life his chief characteristic. He could not endure to coo soft and satisfying things from the pulpit, and so the pulpits of the Church were very generally closed to him. The career he embarked upon was not so startling a departure from tradition as at first sight it would seem to be, for, although his father was a Bristol wine-

merchant, and afterwards landlord of the "Bell," several of his immediate ancestors had been clergymen in the Church of England.

The spirit of Methodism had taken hold of Whitefield at Oxford, whither he had been sent by his widowed mother, the landlady of the

THE "BELL" INN.

"Bell," and that spirit made him look back with a severe eye upon his own youth. 'Tis ever thus. Your sinner saved always, from unconscious artistic influence, draws his peccadilloes on the largest scale and paints them in the strongest colours; and thus when we read Whitefield's account of his own boyhood, of the time before he was sent

to college and when he helped his mother in the business, we smile at the inevitable exaggerations. He tells us, "I put on my blue apron and my snuffers, washed mops, cleaned rooms, and, in one word, became a professed and common drawer for nigh a year and a half." Rather an amiable trait in his character than otherwise, we may think, for he left school solely to help his mother in the business, for some years after the death of his father in a declining state, and not easily able to afford hired help. But he does not, in his fragment of autobiography, dwell upon this aspect of affairs, rather choosing to spread the black paint very thick here. "I was so brutish," he says, "as to hate instruction, and used perversely to shun all opportunities of receiving it." But most boys are like that. "Soon," he continues, "I gave pregnant proofs of an impudent temper. Lying, filthy talking, and foolish jesting I was much addicted to, even when very young. Sometimes I used to curse, if not swear." Oh, terrible! "Stealing from my mother I thought no theft at all, and used to make no scruple of taking money out of her pocket before she was up. I have frequently betrayed my trust, and have more than once spent money I took in the house in buying fruit, tarts, etc., to satisfy my sensual appetite."

Not very shocking, these petty defalcations, but perhaps some unveiled enormity lies within that "etcetera." They are generally the etceteras that so greatly swell our bills. Whitefield, however, took these things very seriously, or affected

to do so, and said in after-life, "It would be endless to recount the sins and offences of my younger days. They are more in number than the hairs of my head." Was that reference to the hairs of his head made with his tongue in his cheek? It is a fair question, for at the time he wrote this he wore a wig, as the portraits of him show.

His mother was used to declare that she expected more comfort from him than from any of her children. "This," he tells us, "with the circumstance of my being born in an inn, has often been of service to me, in exciting my endeavours to make good my mother's expectations, and so follow the example of my dear Saviour, who was born in a manger belonging to an inn."

Her ambitions for her son seem to have been of a temporal, rather than a spiritual, character, and she quite possibly did not altogether relish the exhortations of that brand plucked from the burning, to cease from her stiff-neckedness and become of the elect. Many thousands of others, persuaded by his dramatic preaching and persuasive voice—perhaps also by his terrifying squint, with which caricaturists have made us familiar—did so, and he was overshadowed as a revivalist only by the Wesleys. Driven, like them, from the Church by the Church's apathy and dislike of zeal, his unwonted and unwanted enthusiasm and anxiety to save sinners gave him a career outside its pale. Dying in 1770, in America, he is commemorated in London by his Tabernacle in the

Tottenham Court Road, originally ugly, but rebuilt in 1900 in the hideous manner of what is called "the New Art," looking like the theatre of unholy, rather than Christian, rites.

This famous "Bell" was at a slightly later period kept by John and Sybella Philpotts, whose four sons became successful in widely different walks of life. John Philpotts, before he became landlord of this inn, had been a small landed proprietor in Herefordshire. He sold his acres to provide the capital for a brick and tile works at Bridgwater, and then in 1782 came to Gloucester and bought and kept this house, afterwards becoming, in addition, land-agent to the Dean and Chapter. His son John became a barrister, another rose to be a General in the Army, Thomas was a West Indian planter, and Henry became Bishop of Exeter. Henry was born in 1788; here, according to some authorities, at Bridgwater according to others. The same incertitude reigns respecting the birthplace of Cardinal Vaughan, born here, or at the house once the "Spa" hotel.

Gloucester, city of mediæval importance, is still, to a considerable degree, a city of old inns. Most picturesque of all these is the "New Inn," which, like many things styled "new," has so long outlived its novelty that it is by far the oldest in the city; while those older inns of the days of its youth are vanished and forgot. The "New Inn," originally built in the middle of the fifteenth century by John Twynning, a monk of the

Abbey of Gloucester, stands in Northgate Street, entered by an archway conducting into a court-yard, in the time-honoured fashion of all those ancient hostelries, whose numbers have become in these days of "improvement" so wofully thinned.

THE "NEW INN."

Still the old gables look down upon the courtyard, as of yore, and still the ancient galleries, restored from the decay of seventy years ago, run around the first and second floors, very much as they did in that fifteenth century, when the monks of the Abbey built the house for the accommodation of

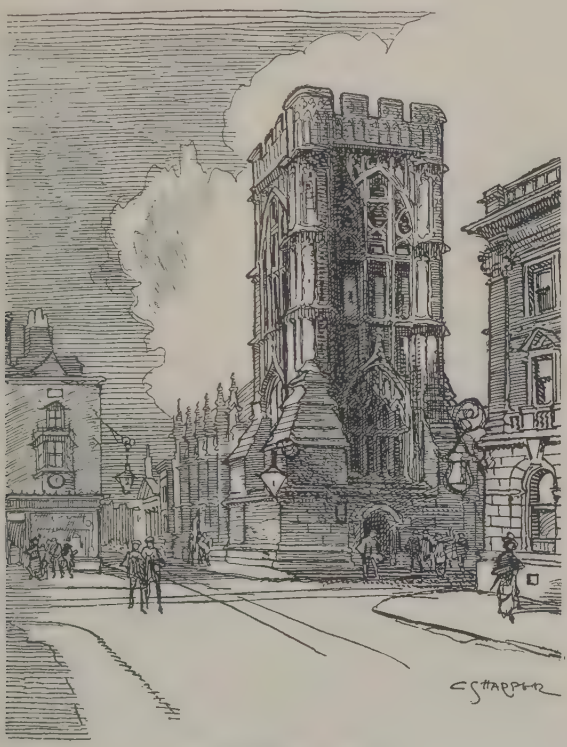
pilgrims flocking to the shrine of Edward II. Mediæval quaintness and early nineteenth-century comforts conjoin at the "New Inn"; so that neither a way-worn pilgrim from one of those gallery bedrooms, nor a coachman, redolent of rum and milk, from that Georgian bar-parlour, would seem out of place. Summer and autumn transfigure this courtyard into the likeness of a rustic bower, for it is plentifully hung with virginia creepers, from amidst whose leaves that plaster lion who mounts guard on the roof of the bar looks as though he were gazing forth of his native jungle.

Most of Gloucester's other old inns are situated in Westgate Street. There you may discover the "Fleece," very like the "New Inn," but smaller; the "Fountain," in its little courtyard; the "King's Head," rambling, dreary, stucco-fronted, in a courtyard; and the "Booth Hall" hotel, nearly opposite.

II

"Gloucester Cross" has been mentioned, and it is a name that arouses interest. The stranger figures to himself some hoary, mediæval landmark; but, in strictly unromantic fact, the place so named is but that central point in the city, where those four long streets, Northgate, Southgate, Eastgate, and Westgate, meet, and form at the present time the most outstanding features

and relics of the old Roman city of Glevum, which, originally the Caer Glou—the Fair City—of the Britons, became by degrees the Saxon Gleawanceastre, and at last the Gloucester of the present.



GLOUCESTER CROSS.

Gloucester Cross is therefore merely the place where those thoroughfares meet, and all too narrow a place for modern needs, now that Gloucester has installed electric tramways, as a

kind of municipal toy. It is not possible to convince an unprejudiced stranger that electric tramways are required, or can pay their expenses, in a city whose length or breadth can be walked in little more than ten minutes.

But if there be no cross at this junction of streets, the spot is dignified and saved from merely commercial commonplace by the church of St. Michael, whose extraordinarily heavy and massive tower is a striking feature, and of such unusual proportions that it suggests having been built of stones left over from the alterations to the Cathedral in the Perpendicular period. In common with several others among the Gloucester churches, this tower leans perceptibly to one side—a feature particularly noticeable in the spire of St. John's, with its warped top, and the whole of the tower and spire of St. Nicholas, Westgate.

To the stranger coming into Gloucester from Cheltenham along Northgate Street, with intent to pursue the old highway on to Ross, and so eventually to Milford Haven, the way would seem to be straight ahead, by Southgate Street. There, however, he would go wrong, for that way lies the road to Berkeley and Bristol, and it is by turning to the right, at the Cross, down Westgate Street, that he will be on the right track.

Westgate Street, and its continuation, Lower Westgate Street, form, in two senses, the lowest quarter of Gloucester, for it is there and in the confluent alleys that the poor live, and that the "lodgings for travellers"—the said travellers

WESTGATE STREET.

being, of course, tramps—cluster thickly. Here, too, the ground slopes away gradually down to the Severn, into whose yellow stream, or aimlessly and dejectedly across the flat meadows, gaze the out-o'-works, the don't-want-any-works, and the generally idle, from necessity or choice, of the city. Here, from the bridge that spans the river, you look in one direction upon the railway, entering Gloucester from Cheltenham on an interminable series of arches carried across the low-lying land, and on the other gaze away to where the distant Welsh hills rise faintly into the sky. Ahead goes the road, flat and dusty, as far as eye can reach, or its bordering trees permit.

Yet Westgate Street is the most picturesque in Gloucester, and owns some of the most interesting houses. Here are fine old mansions built, two centuries ago and more, for the merchants and other wealthy folk of that day—mansions now divided into tenements and poor lodgings, and miserable with neglect and dirt. Here—not, happily, reduced to that condition—is the house where Bishop Hooper was kept under guard, the night before he was burnt at the stake. It is now a chemist's shop, and bears the title of the "Bishop Hooper Pharmacy." Opposite stands that chief feature of the street, St. Nicholas' Church, remarkable for its fine tower and for its unfinished spire, capped oddly by a stone crown; and further remarkable for the sanctuary knocker still hanging on its door, representing a fiend seizing the soul of a witch and making off for the infernal regions—

one of those pleasing performances in design characteristic of the mediæval mind.

For the rest, there are many pleasant nooks and quaint corners to be found in Gloucester, which is at once a busy and a restful place—modern, if you want modernity, and ancient if you require the antique and are skilled in the quest of such requirements. A famous place, too, under many heads. Were you asked, in the manner of a dominie, suddenly and point-blank, "For what is Gloucester famous?" you would probably answer, "For Richard Crookback, Duke of Gloucester, and afterwards Richard III., that favourite character of old-time tragedians; for pins, for 'double-Gloster' cheese, and for its Cathedral": a pretty fine miscellaneous medley too. But that catalogue would require considerable enlargements and emendations before it was fairly correct and comprehensive. You would have forgotten, for instance, the salmon of Severn, and the lampreys, that eel-like fish of which Henry I. was so inordinately fond that he was cut off, whether untimeously or not I do not pretend to say, by a surfeit of them, in the sixty-fifth year of his age and the thirty-fifth of his reign. You

SANCTUARY KNOCKER, ST. NICHOLAS', WESTGATE.

would have forgotten, too, that Robert Raikes, whose birthplace is still to be seen here, picturesquely half-timbered, almost opposite the "Bell" inn, was born at Gloucester in 1735, and has a wide celebrity as the founder of Sunday schools; and would have passed over the fact that, although seventeen miles from the salt estuary waters of the Severn, this city is, by favour of a canal, a thriving, a busy, and an increasingly busy port, with docks and wharves and tall ships zealously taking in and discharging cargoes all day and every day. As for the pins, they ceased to be made at Gloucester quite a long while ago; and as for the "double-Gloster" cheese, whose savour I fondly remember out of the misty recesses of bygone years, that also appears to be a thing of the past. Let us shed a salt tear for those things that were, the things that are no more!

I leave that most famous and worshipful of all things, the Cathedral—that great fane whose tower guides you from afar—to the last.

III

The Cathedral of Gloucester, which was only elevated from an abbey to the higher dignity in the reign of Henry VIII., when the See of Gloucester was carved out of that of Worcester, is the fourth in a series of great religious houses built in this ancient town, and the second on this particular site. The first, established so long ago

as A.D. 681, was an abbey founded for a mixed establishment of monks and nuns, and was destroyed, eighty-six years later, in the troubles that then ravaged the country. The second, founded fifty-six years later, was a house of secular priests, who, by all accounts, seem to have enjoyed a good secular, high-living time of it, and were ejected and replaced in 1022 by Benedictines, who began piously but ended in very much the same way thirty-seven years later, when, presumably in some of their drunken orgies, the monastery was destroyed by fire.

The third building, the predecessor of the present, and built on this site, was begun in 1058. It lasted but thirty-one years, for in 1089 Serlo, the first Norman abbot, began, like Norman abbots all England over, to rebuild on a vastly larger scale. The Normans were, indeed, in a sense, the Americans of their time, and generally sought, in the size of their religious buildings, to "lick creation." They saw the Saxon buildings, swept them away, and went several times better, or at any rate larger; but it was left to the fifteenth century to lengthen it and bring it up to its measurement, from east to west, of four hundred and twenty feet.

Serlo laid his foundations in 1089, and consecrated the great church in another twelve years. In 1102 it was injured by fire, again in 1122, and often in after-years; but, despite conflagrations, the partial rebuildings of later abbots, and the changes and chances of eight centuries, the body

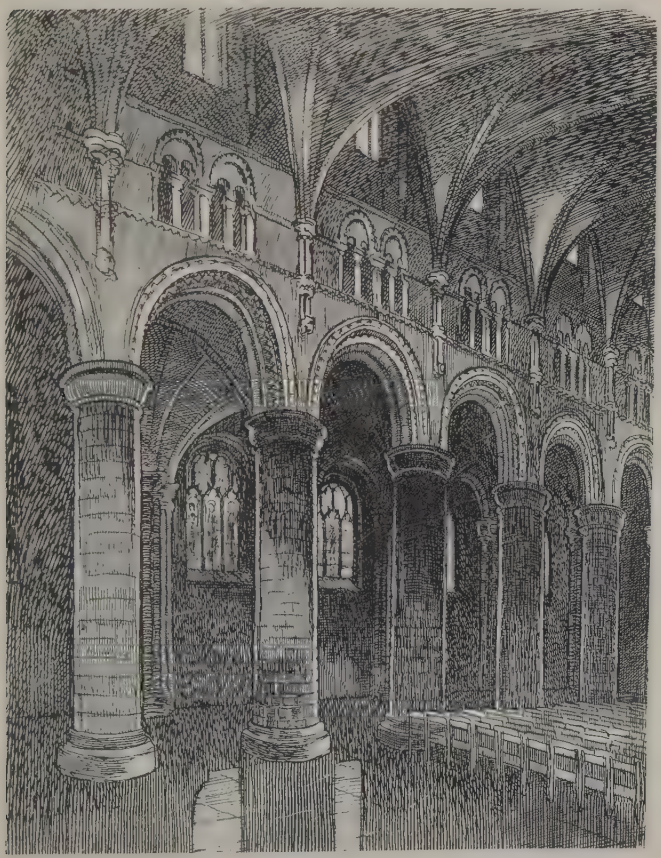
of the cathedral is still, essentially and constructionally, the building reared by Serlo. It is no small thing that we should have preserved to us, little altered, this Norman nave, and, beneath the veil of Perpendicular tracery in transepts and choir, the coeval masonry of the solid walls that keep the great structure in being; for when we have enumerated the still-existing Norman naves of St. Albans, Peterborough, Norwich, Durham, and Hereford, we have set down all those of the first rank that the rebuilding zeal of later generations, or the accidents of that vast intervening space of time, have left us.

This great age of the fabric is little guessed from without, for the exterior is so remodelled in most of its parts and so gorgeously crowned with its central fifteenth-century tower that it might be set down, at the cursory glance, as largely of the Perpendicular period. It is thus a surprise, when you enter by the restored fifteenth-century south door, to encounter a Norman interior that, save in its close counterpart of Tewkesbury Abbey, has no fellow in England. For it is Norman architecture of an early period and of a singular type we see here. Sturdily they built always, and generally with a tendency to a thick-set, pot-bellied squatness; but here you perceive the great cylindrical columns of the nave to be slim in relation to their height, and to wear, plain to see, evidences of that classic tradition whence Norman or Romanesque architecture, clumsily and in fumbling manner, but still unquestionably,

derived. These serried rows of columns thus give the long alleys of this Christian church very much the appearance of some pagan temple completed after long lapse of time by early Gothic architects from whom the sense of proportion was withheld. It is the comparative closeness of these columns to one another, and the consequent small size of the arches which cap them, that causes this striking disproportion, giving as odd an effect as though the body and shoulders of a giant were surmounted by the head of a child. The great scale of those columns, taken with the very much smaller one of the triforium and clerestory stages above them, almost suggests that he who designed did not stop to count the cost, and was obliged to complete the work in a very minor key. The effect is one not lost upon the many visitors to Gloucester Cathedral thoughout the year; but it is not the sense of disproportionate parts that arrests the attention of the many, but the undeniable air of vastness, rude majesty, and power thus produced, which doubtless had its effect in those dim days when mankind lay under clerical rule.

History, embodied in a dank, mouldy breath, rushes to meet you as you enter: Gloucester is the mouldiest of all our cathedrals, doubtless owing this particular characteristic to its situation, little raised above the banks of the Severn. It is an interior well attired for the ancient place it has in history, and we can never be sufficiently thankful that the projected alterations of Abbot Morwent, about 1430, halted at the second bay from the

west. His intentions of making the whole body of what was then the abbey "of like worke" were larger than the circumstances of the time



THE NAVE, GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL.

permitted to be carried out, and we have thus left the grim Norman work of eight hundred years ago, which enshrines and grandly images

the early story of the place. Only by narrow chance do those great Norman columns remain unaltered. Bishop Benson expended great sums of money, about 1740, in repaving the nave and in other works, and Kent, his consulting architect, proposed to "flute" the stonework. He would have done it, too, but discovered that these stones are only a casing and the body of the columns merely rubble.

It is a gloomy and cavernous, as well as a majestic, interior, reflecting a time when men's minds were gloomy and superstitious. If you would find a peep-hole into the superstitious Norman mind, you can make no better quest than in the great, heavy, darkling buildings of that age, when the Powers of Evil were very real, and the bright and shining ones, striving with all the Devils of the Pit for the possession of men's souls, were ever and again worsted by those creatures of darkness who raised and directed every storm and, as was fully understood and believed at that time, caused every one of the fires that burnt or injured so many abbeys and cathedrals. The Normans built massively and strong, partly because their knowledge of strain and stress in stone and timber was imperfect, but, we may suspect, a great deal more because the inimical spirits of earth and air were so very real to them, so evilly disposed, and so instant to wreak damage. The building of religious houses at this period was attended by many marvels, produced, of course, by supernatural agencies. Was a brother of the monas-

tery, directing operations on some dizzy height, flung over by the machinations of the Devil, jealous of the building's progress, then it is odds but he would be bunked up in mid-air by an angel-in-waiting, so to speak, and his life saved. Did an abbot seek some favourable spot in some sheltered and fertile vale where to establish himself and the brethren, the place was forthwith revealed to him in a vision.

The traces of infernal malice—to accept the Norman view of the fire which broke out in 1122—are still visible on the stones of the great nave columns, ruddy yet with the breath of the flames; and where, by the same way of thinking, the Devil strove to overthrow the building, some six hundred years ago, may yet be seen in the walls and pilasters of the south aisle, reclining fantastically and alarmingly outwards. Modern ways of looking at things, however, rather lean towards blaming the builders for their bad foundations, or else attribute this departure from the perpendicular to that gradual drainage, and consequent shrinking, of the once marshy soil which has, as we have already seen, thrown several among Gloucester's churches out of plumb. The Devil, on this count at least, is acquitted, and leaves the court without this additional stain on his character.

Miraculous, too, was thought that happening in 1170, when, the Bishop of Worcester being engaged in celebrating Mass at the high altar, the south-western tower suddenly fell, no stone

touching him, and he—brave man!—proceeding as though nothing had happened. It looks like a noble absorption in his religious duties, and one recalls Wilson Barrett in the drama *Claudian*, standing calmly, with folded arms, while the stage earthquake topples old Rome about his ears; but the Bishop was at the east end of the building, quite two hundred feet away, and was probably rather deaf. We should not, however, make indecent haste to gibe at that twelfth-century finding of the marvellous where no marvel existed, for the imaginations of twentieth-century reporters are quite as keen, and we often read of the "narrow escape" of some distinguished personage, only to discover that while his carriage-horses were bolting in the south of England he was addressing a political meeting in the north of Scotland, and might have run a considerable risk had he been where he was not, six hundred miles away. The world is indeed full of wonders, and although the superstitions and credulous fancies of mediævalism are done, they will never lack while we keep a free and untrammelled Press.

IV

The Norman kings were accustomed to spend their Christmases at Gloucester; and then to the city, the abbey, and the castle—that castle which has vanished so utterly—resorted the law-givers, the oppressors, and the generally high and

mighty of the land. It was on one of these occasions that, in the Chapter-house, the Domesday survey was projected and approved; and at the Christmas of 1093 that Rufus, being ill and like to die, experienced a pious and penitential interval, and ceased awhile from being a ravening lion to assume the character of an innocent lamb. There were no half-measures about those eleventh-century kings. Like that little girl celebrated in the nursery-rhyme, who—

> When she was good, she was very, very good,
> But when she was bad she was horrid,

they were creatures of extremes. Either, like Edward the Confessor, butter would scarce melt in their months, or else, like this same Rufus in his most characteristic moments, they were for stealing the revenues of the Church, plucking out Jews' teeth, and extirpating the eyes of people against whom they nursed a grudge. On this occasion, when Rufus thought it to be all over with him, he was eager to perform a good deed, as a kind of startlingly contrastive colophon to an evil career, and, hearing how pious a man was the humble monk Anselm, decided to elevate him to be Archbishop of Canterbury. Anselm refused, but the King, overruling that refusal, closed the monk's hand upon the archiepiscopal crozier, and would take no denial. And then—the King recovered, and resumed his evil courses with redoubled ardour. Anselm, as in duty bound, acted as guardian of the Church over

whose fortunes in England he was placed, and thus King and Archbishop became the bitterest enemies, very much as, some sixty years later, another King and another Archbishop were to quarrel; only, if we read the indications on the blood-stained and blotted pages of history aright, it was the Church that, close upon seven years after Anselm's elevation, murdered the King, not, as in the struggle between Henry II. and Becket, the King who instigated the murder of the Archbishop.

It was in the Norman Abbey of St. Peter whose only surviving portion is the massive nave of the cathedral, that the tragic end of Rufus was foretold with such correctness that it would seem as if the clergy had a guilty foreknowledge of the Red King's doom. He had oppressed all classes of the realm alike, the nation was under a papal interdict, and everything was to be gained by his death. Were it but a coincidence, it would be the most amazing coincidence ever recorded. On August 1st, 1100, Abbot Fulchard, of Shrewsbury, preached a sermon in the abbey pulpit on the miseries of England, and in the course of it predicted with exact imagery the manner of the King's end. "The Lord God," he said, "will overthrow with a terrible convulsion the mountains of Gilboa. The anger of the Lord will no longer spare transgressors. . . . The bow of Divine wrath is bent against the reprobate, and the swift arrow is taken from the quiver to inflict wounds. Quickly this will be done."

And quickly it was done, as was only to be expected in the dark conspiracies of that time, when the Church worked out the fulfilment of its own prophecies. Abbot Serlo, of Gloucester, immediately sent word of that remarkable sermon to the King, hunting in the New Forest, but that unrepentant sinner only scoffed at the warning. Yet it was that day, August 3rd, that he met his tragic fate in the glades of the New Forest, by the agency of Walter Tyrrell's glanced arrow, dying there, miserably and inarticulate, with the barb transfixing his throat.

He rests not at Gloucester, but at Winchester; but here, in an eastern chapel of this cathedral, lies his unfortunate elder brother Robert "Curthose," Duke of Normandy, who died in captivity in Cardiff Castle, and is handsomely commemorated by a life-sized, coroneted wooden effigy. It is an ironic circumstance in what Tennyson very appropriately calls "our rough island story" that kings and princes were often heartlessly murdered, under conditions of revolting barbarity, presently to be honoured with the most sumptuous monuments, and their resting-places frequently resorted to, as to sacred shrines.

Here, for example, is the beautiful monument of Edward II., canopied with forests of stone pinnacles and set about with rich tabernacle-work. It is beautiful and interesting even yet, although injured in the seventeenth century, and injured still more by those who repaired and "restored" it, according to their insufficient lights, in 1737,

1789, 1798, and 1876. The latest restoration was the pious work of Oriel College, Oxford, founded by that ill-fated monarch. Fortunately, those who have laid hands upon the monument have done little to the alabaster effigy of the King, which still lies here, calm and majestic, with placid face; and obviously, if we compare it with the effigy of his son, Edward III., at Westminster Abbey, to which the countenance bears a strong resemblance, an excellent likeness.

Alas poor "Longshanks," cut off untimely in his forty-third year, the victim of fierce mediæval jealousies quite as much as of his own defects! It is close upon six hundred years since he was cruelly done to death in Berkeley Castle, and few are the things that remain clear to us at such a distance of time; but we know a great deal of the second Edward's personal character, as it appeared to those contemporary with him, and it certainly seems that he owed his fate quite as much to the disappointed ambitions of those who were not his favourites as to the unworthiness of himself or those whom he delighted to honour. Tall, strong, and handsome, he was yet (a very serious reproach in his day) devoid of courage, a thing that seemed so strange a trait in the son of the martial Edward I. that there were not wanting those who thought him, on that account, a changeling. To that defect he added a general shiftlessness and lack of business instincts, and early exhibited a fondness for drink and low companions, and a pronounced distaste for the society of those

approaching his own station. But the thing that wholly undid him was his infatuation for Piers Gaveston and Hugh le Despenser—the first a favourite from his childhood, and banished by command of his father, but recalled when Edward ascended the throne in his twenty-third year, and created Earl of Cornwall. It cannot be denied that Edward was a staunch friend, for he suffered much and risked everything for the friendship of Gaveston, and afterwards, when "the Gascon" was seized and executed, for Despenser, who met the same fate.

But many other things helped to consummate the tardy ending of the long-drawn tragedy—tardy, for we must not forget that this unhappy reign was by no means a short one, and lasted twenty years. Men who had taken part in the first Edward's wars with the Scots, had helped him extinguish the independence of Wales, and shared with him the glory of contested fields in France, grew disloyal under the feebly conducted hostilities of the new reign, which witnessed the English defeat at Bannockburn—that Scottish victory of the first magnitude whose memory Scotsmen will never let die—and, further, witnessed Scottish raids up to the very walls of York. It wanted but that continuance in an obstinate favouritism upon which the King was bent to upset his rule, and when at length his Queen, Isabella, the "She-Wolf of France," broke away from him and was joined in arms by Roger Mortimer, Lord of Wigmore, most powerful among

the Lords Marchers of Wales, his fate was sealed. He fled to the west and sought shelter at Lundy Island, fortified and stored with provisions over against such a need. But storms prevented a landing on that rocky islet, and the King was obliged to land at Swansea, whence he retired to Neath, to be arrested at Llantrissant by two emissaries of the Queen, towards the close of 1326, and imprisoned at Kenilworth. Imprisoned kings have short lives: they are too dangerous a charge to those who have usurped their place, and so perish speedily and mysteriously. To Edward fell a longer shrift than common, for his gaolers were concerned to try what ill-usage might do, before they resorted to actual murder. Thus he was removed from Kenilworth to Berkeley, and thence to the dungeons of Corfe, already bloody with assassinations, and thence to Berkeley again; suffering many indignities on the way, denied sufficient food and clothing, prevented from sleeping, crowned by the wayside with a crown of hay, and shaved by the aid of ditchwater. Mediæval chroniclers have added a touch of farce to his tragedy by telling how the King, weeping bitterly, declared, as the tears ran down his face, that he would have hot water, whether they allowed it or not. The Queen, not satisfied with these rigours, reprimanded his gaolers for their "mild treatment," and so the King was persuaded to die by the ingenious means of immuring him in the dungeons of Berkeley and feeding him on putrid meat. Even that heroic treatment did not

suffice. His constitution was proof against all such outrages, and, less direct means proving useless, he was murdered, we are told by Adam Murimuth, about the feast of St. Matthew the Evangelist, September 21st, 1327, by Sir John Maltravers and Sir Thomas de Gournay, who caused him to be placed between two heavy doors, and then slowly tortured him to death by thrusting a red-hot spit—or, as some accounts have it, a plumbing-iron—into his intestines. The horrified peasants at Berkeley that night heard the terrible shrieks of the tortured wretch, penetrating even those massive walls of Berkeley Castle, and when morning came were bidden to enter and gaze upon the dead body, lying there apparently unwounded.

The feared vengeance of the Queen and her favourite, Mortimer, now all-powerful in the land, dissuaded all from offering the last respects to that dead King—all save that daring prelate Abbot John Thokey, of St. Peter's, Gloucester, who begged the body and buried it, with much reverence, within these walls. A few years passed, the King's son reigned in his stead, Mortimer was hanged and gibbeted, and Isabella, in retirement, devoted to good deeds that might haply win atonement. Then it was that this beautiful monument was raised to the memory of the second Edward, and then began that stream of pilgrims to it, as to a shrine, which lasted full a hundred and fifty years. Abbot Thokey's generous impulse had an unlooked-for reward, for those who came to pray and miraculously to leave their complaints

behind them at the "martyr's" tomb, brought thank-offerings in gold and silver to the abbey, which owed all the magnificent circumstances of its later changes and embellishments to the funds thus acquired.

V

Thence came the incitement to that remodelling of the interior which began with the south transept under Abbot John Wigmore in 1329, and resulted in the extraordinary veiling of the rude Norman work with—we may find no better term for it—a *web* of decoration that transfigured every part but the nave. It were perhaps not too much to say that the Perpendicular style was born here, for, although it seems to have broken out, after the fashion of an epidemic, almost simultaneously all over the country, yet it is decidedly early Perpendicular, and of a somewhat thin and lathy kind peculiar to this south-western district. The age was dissatisfied with the heavy Norman work, and yet scarce prepared to go the great length of pulling down the building, to re-erect it on a more approved model; and so it compromised, demolishing and rebuilding the upper, or clerestory, in the lighter style, and casing the rest with light ornamental panellings of stone. Great, empty, cavernous Norman arches were made look more lightsome by the expedient of filling them with this skeleton work, which everywhere produces an

effect comparable with the tacking of fretwork panels upon a rugged tree-trunk. It is in design and execution so light that it does indeed suggest carpenter-work—inspired carpentry perhaps, but still that rather than the product of the mason's craft. But it is, at any rate, singularly interesting, and sometimes rises even to beauty—somewhat exceptional a chance, it will be allowed, for that last and least artistic phase of Gothic architecture.

It was somewhere between 1360 and 1381 that the beautiful cloisters were begun and completed. There are other very fine cloisters at Salisbury, at Norwich, and elsewhere, but nowhere else do they quite touch the beauty and interest of these arcaded walks, whose most outstanding feature is the elaborate fan-vaulting that so gorgeously roofs them in. Magnificent in themselves, it is from the cloister-garth that the best and most entirely satisfying view of the cathedral is obtained. It is only from this point of view—in the opinion of one writer, of myself, that is to say—that the great cathedral tower looks entirely satisfactory. Viewed otherwhence, it is more than a thought too lace-like and fragile, too overladen with ornament, to be quite satisfactory, and too bedizened with detail to look its height of two hundred and twenty-five feet. It was commenced under the rule of Abbot Seabroke, who flourished between 1450 and 1457, and was completed by Robert Tully, who died in 1482. With the exception of the great Lady Chapel, whose

date is 1457-99, it is the latest piece of architecture in the whole fabric.

But from the cloister-garth, surrounded and reinforced by the grouped attendant buildings of sterner mould, it looks wonderfully impressive, and gains from the stronger, simpler lines of the old Norman transept tourelles a reflection of majesty. Gazing upon it thus, you perceive that it is not of lacework, but of indubitable stone, that this "pharos to the neighbouring hills," as Leland styles it, is reared. It seems scarce credible, but the destruction of the cathedral was a thing agreed upon in 1657, when certain persons arranged for it, "agreed amongst themselves for their several proportions of the plunder expected out of it," and actually provided instruments and tackle for taking down the tower, before they were stopped.

These cloisters, whence this tower so admirably justifies itself, are the birthplace of that peculiarly English accessory to architectural beauty, fan-vaulting, here sprung, fully developed, from the fertile brain of some unknown master of craft. The cloisters were begun under Abbot Horton, continued by Boyfield, and completed in the time of Abbot Frocester; but this is by no means to say that to those abbots should be awarded the credit of originating so beautiful and striking a feature. Some unknown brother of the monastery, inspired with the thought, sat down and worked out the idea with pencil and rule and callipers—and behold, fan-vaulting was brought into existence, to

spread, a thing of matchless grace, throughout the land.

There may still be seen, in the south walk of these cloisters, and facing north, in chilly shade, the twenty exiguous little hutches, called "carrels,"

ST. MARY'S GATE.

to which the monks resorted for study; and in the north walk, under the windows lit by the sun's rays from the south, is the monk's lavatory, the long stone trough where they washed their faces and hands, and at last ceased from that

washing, and were cast forth, more than three hundred and fifty years ago.

One may emerge from the precincts upon the secular streets by St. Mary's Gate, a very beauti-

THE "PARLIAMENT HOUSE," GLOUCESTER.

ful example of a period little represented at Gloucester—the Early English period. It was outside this gate, on the site of the present scarcely adequate Bishop Hooper memorial, that

that pious man was burnt as "an obstinate heretic" in 1555.

Many quaint and ancient buildings remain in the Close, chief of them, of course, the Deanery, a building made up of many anachronistic periods, but largely embodying the old Norman "Abbot's Lodgings." There, too, is the timbered "Parliament House," traditionally the place where many of the nation's palavers were held in those days when Parliament sat here, there, and elsewhere, just where the King happened at the time to be, and so had a very troublesome, perambulatory time of it.

VI

THE way out of Gloucester, once across the Severn, goes, flat and dull as yesterday's newspaper, for over six miles. You pass over the main stream of that river, and, in another half-mile, over a lesser branch, and then you come, with an admirable appropriateness, to the village of Over. Between Gloucester and this point the road is not merely flat and straight, but is an old causeway, raised above the marshy level of the low-lying meadows. Tall elms border the way, and just before Over is reached the Great Western Railway cuts under and athwart the road, its lengthy stretches of fences bearing the self-denying notice, "No bill-sticking allowed." Self-denying, because the railway not only forbids

the usual advertising disfigurement of the approach to a city, but does not even exhibit its own posters. Here practice and precept are one.

Although the site of Over was an important strategic advanced post with the Romans, the place is now sufficiently insignificant, consisting as it does of only a few scattered houses. Beyond it the road goes, broad and dusty, to the parting of the ways at Highnam Court, and thenceforward goes, dusty and broad, to Birdwood and Huntley. For all this is so peaceful, not to say dull, a road, it has witnessed a sufficiency of alarums and excursions, not only in ancient times, when desperate deeds were the commonplaces of every highway, but within a period so comparatively recent as 1643, when, the wars of the Parliament with Charles I. being in progress, and the city of Gloucester held for the Parliament by Colonel Massey, a besieging force of eight thousand horse and foot under the King himself surrounded it on August 10th, and lay close siege for twenty-five days, being compelled to withdraw only on September 5th, on the approach of the Earl of Essex with ten thousand men. Highnam Court, in the varying fortunes of those times, knew one master this week and another the next, and was so hardly used by both sides that it became quite uninhabitable, and so, when more peaceful times were come again, was necessarily rebuilt. The especial incident in which Highnam figured happened, however, earlier in that year of the siege. It was in March that Lord Herbert, a zealous

Royalist partisan, approached Gloucester with a force of Welshmen not large enough for a siege, but sufficiently numerous for considerable annoyance. They established themselves at Highnam, turned out the owner, Colonel Cooke, a noted sympathiser with the Parliament, and made preparations for harrying the garrison of Gloucester. But on March 24th the tables were turned upon them with a vengeance. The Parliamentary General, Sir William Waller, operating with a force in the neighbourhood of Cirencester, and hearing of this danger threatening Gloucester, made a feint of besieging the former town, but, by arrangement with Colonel Massey, concocted a plan by which, countermarching, he should fall upon Lord Herbert's force in the rear, while Massey engaged them in front. The plan worked to a marvel. Massey sallied forth from Gloucester with an obviously weak force, and Herbert advanced to meet him with a much stronger one. Meanwhile Waller's troops occupied the rear, and the Welsh were thus caught on the road between Over and Gloucester, suffering utter surprise and rout. Five hundred Welshmen were slain that day, in the headlong flight back to Highnam and along the Newent road at Barber's Bridge, where to-day the stranger may see the cross-crested obelisk erected over the heaps of skeletons discovered on the spot in 1868, the spot unsleeping tradition had always pointed out as the place where the dead were buried. The monument is partly constructed of stones from the old city

wall of Gloucester, and bears inscriptions in English, Welsh, and Latin; the English running, "These stones, taken from the ancient walls of the city of Gloucester, mark the burial-place of the Welsh of Lord Herbert's force, who fell in the combined attack of Sir William Waller and Colonel Massey on their entrenchments at Highnam, March 24th, 1643."

Passing Birdwood, scarce knowing—so small is it—that it has been passed, one comes presently to a right-hand turning, furnished with a sign-post inscribed "Solomon's Tump, three furlongs." This explorer, at least, can never resist such an invitation to the discovery of the strange and wonderful surely to be expected from such an announcement. Anything related to Solomon would seem to connote magnificence—and "Solomon in all his glory" one murmurs, sub-consciously, on reading that wayside direction. "Tump," too! Being a Shropshireman, I know that word, which is indeed common all along these marchland counties, and know that it is a word of elastic significances, and may indicate anything from a mountain to a muck-heap. What, therefore, shall be discovered at the end of these three furlongs?

Little enough, as a matter of fact. Having gone that distance and encountered nothing more marvellous than four commonplace cottages at the end of a country lane, the explorer asks for Solomon's Tump, and is a little dashed to find that this is it. Asked who he wants, he with difficulty represses the reply of "Solomon," and

fruitlessly seeks light on the origin of this grandiose name. No one knows: no one, the disappointed pilgrim bitterly reflects, ever does; and thus, having discovered no Solomon and no Tump, he returns to the great high-road, to pursue, past the small village of Huntley, with its rebuilt church, the tenor of his way. A very uneven tenor it presently becomes, for in little over two miles the road rises toward the great woody height of May Hill.

VII

But at Huntley, it must be observed, travellers for Monmouth sometimes turned off to the left and went through the heart of the Forest of Dean, through Mitcheldean, Coleford, and Staunton, along an ancient but winding and excessively hilly road, whose antiquity seems vouched for the name of Staunton itself, the Stone Town, or town on the stones—*i.e.* the stone-paved road. Climbing the rises of Staunton Hill, this way then dropped steeply down to the Wye and Monmouth.

This way frequently came the horsemen who, despising the early coaches, and unable to afford post-chaises, made their journeys in the saddle, and were less dependent than those who went on wheels upon the condition of the road. Among them were the judges, riding circuit from Gloucester to Monmouth. The tradition of their travelling this way survives still in the name of the

"Judges' Lodgings" given to a house where they were accustomed to stay the night, at the foot of Plump Hill, near Mitcheldean. It was at different times hoped to make this route better used, and improvements were made to that end in 1795, when James Graham, landlord of the "George" inn, Mitcheldean, made sanguine by these alterations, advertised that the "new road" saved "at least one mile" over that by way of Ross, and that he had post-chaises and horses and "sober drivers." Evidently there were rivals in the posting business on the other line of road whose drivers were not always so sober as it was desirable they should be. But we seem to see that the sobriety which was so excellent a trait in postboys was not so altogether desirable in the landlord's guests, for Mr. Graham concludes with the announcement that he keeps a stock of the finest port and other wines, and was doubtless better pleased when his patrons were carried up to bed in a manner that then became every gentleman, than he was when they were suffering from gout and were reduced to a diet of toast and water.

Unfortunately for fond hopes, the mail coaches continued to go by Ross, and the bulk of the traffic selected the same route.

May Hill, to which we now return, has an alias, and is sometimes known as Yartledon. Now this *is* a tump indeed, and would be fully worthy the name of that wise and magnificent monarch, Solomon. It rises nine hundred and seventy-three feet above the levels, and is a

landmark for many miles around. It is, moreover, a place of much ancient legendary lore, and shares with May Hill, Monmouth, the reputation of having been a place of sacrifice to the pagan god Baal. The present name of both these hills is, in the same way, considered to derive from the Roman worship of the goddess Maia; and, however that may be, the summits of both were the scenes of old English May Day games and festivities until all such things died out at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The coach road by which we are progressing from Gloucester to Ross does not, it is true, take its way over the very crest of this crowning height, but it ascends steeply, lengthily, and doggedly very high up the shoulder of it, so that the wayfarer who halts to take a very necessary breath is not surprised to learn its altitude: he only wonders at the moderation of that statement.

A descent of equal steepness leads to the cross-roads near Longhope, and thence presently out of Gloucestershire and into Hereford at Lea, formerly and until 1844 situated in both shires, but since then wholly in Herefordshire. It is a little village, nestling under a hillside, and eccentrically and obstinately styled in these times "The Lea," just as Smith, in hopes to differentiate himself from his fellows, may spell his name "Smythe"; or an O'Gorman Mahon, or a Macintosh, considering himself the chief of his race, arrogates to himself the definite article, and becomes The Macintosh or The O'Gorman Mahon,

to the unconcealed amusement of the ordinary person.

That is a pretty little Early English church which stands by the wayside, at the fringe of the wooded fields at the other end of the village. It has a stone spire, and a pretty, well-kept interior, rendered very much out of the common by a

THE LEA.

modern fresco-painting, by one Maude Berry, on the north wall, illustrating the text, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." It contains a parish chest considerably more than six hundred years old, together with evidences that the present vicar is of extremely High Church sympathies.

Ever since we have left Gloucester we have

been technically in the Forest of Dean, but the stranger may readily be forgiven for being unaware of the fact, at least on the other side of May Hill, where forest boskage is greatly to seek. Here, however, a change has come over the spirit of the scene, and woodlands clothe many of the hilltops. If it be true, as surmised, that Dean Forest obtained its name from the Saxon "dene," a valley, why then it must have been named on singularly arbitrary principles, for this tract of country betwixt the Severn and the Wye is hilly and elevated, and is in fact the watershed of many subsidiary streams that flow variously north-east and north-west into those greater rivers. It has valleys, for every height implies a corresponding hollow, but that is the nearest, and quite insufficient, justification for the name.

The Forest of Dean is something more than a forest: it is a mineral tract, where iron-ore and the coal wherewith to smelt it are discovered economically side by side, and where, before that use and understanding of coal was arrived at, the dense woodlands served the same office. But this road of ours on to Ross does but touch the fringe of the district, and discloses nothing of the collieries still working in its recesses.

Very forest-like and bold and beautiful is the approach to Weston-under-Penyard, when leaving Lea and the cross-roads to Cinderford and Drybrook, just where the old toll-house stands. It is a view not unlike the one you get of that Shropshire height, the Wrekin, from the Holyhead

Road; the tower of Weston church nestling here beneath the wooded sides of Penyard Chase, just as does the tower of Uppington beneath the Wrekin. Dark masses of close-set trees clothe that long ridge, where the foxes and the owls haunt the ruined Roman camp that antiquaries know, and make the air vibrant with their barking and hooting on still nights. Here, in fact, we are upon the easily traceable footsteps of that people, whose heaps of iron cinders are turned over and speculated upon after the passing of fifteen hundred years. Away on the right, on the now sylvan hilltops at Bollitree, stood the Roman station of *Ariconium*, midway on the Roman road between *Glevum* and *Magna Castra*, the prototype of Hereford; and there, prodding the turf with a walking-stick, the refuse cinders of their iron-smelting are struck. There, too, the natural red soil of the country gives place to the black earth marking the site of a former civilisation, and "Cinder Hill" as a place-name gives point to these vestiges of the Has Been.

A curious manifestation that attracts the pilgrim's attention in the small village of Weston-under-Penyard must by no means be forgotten. It is a board fixed upon one of three small cottages, and inscribed:

TEMPERANCE COTTAGES

Who would have thought it?
Abstinence bought it.
If you like a freehold you would buy,
The very same plan you can try.

True! and if abstinence in food and clothing and many other things that need not bulk quite so largely were practised with a rigid attention to saving, one might in the course of long years become quite a considerable landed proprietor. But very much of the joy of living would be snuffed out, and if the example were largely followed, what would become of trade? Let us think it out, on the way into Ross.

VIII

Ross is, both by nature and art, a pleasant place, standing as it does on a promontory overlooking the Horseshoe Bend of the River Wye, and filled with old-fashioned houses and narrow, steep, and tortuous streets. It is a market-town of a cheerful and bustling activity derived from a prosperous agricultural neighbourhood, for Herefordshire seems immune from the agricultural depression that has blighted so many other shires, and Ross on market-days overflows with prosperous-looking farmers and cattle-dealers. Herefordshire cattle —that famous breed of "Herefordshire White-faces"—may possibly be the secret of this abounding well-being. Ross, whose name derives from the Celtic "ros," descriptive of its situation overlooking the Wye, has been the centre whence the scenery of that romantic river is explored, ever since the time when scenery

began to give romantic thrills to the cultured and ceased to oppress travellers with dismal thoughts of bandits and breakdowns of post-chaises and coaches. There was a certain overlapping of the two eras, it is true, for scenery began to find appreciation in the second half of the eighteenth century, when highwaymen and bad roads still proved great discouragements; and the traveller's meditations upon the precipitous gorges of the Wye Valley were doubtless often rudely interrupted by demands for his purse.

Modern shop-fronts have made their appearance since then, and the paving, channelling, kerbing, and lighting of the streets have left nothing to choose in such respects between Ross and places near London; but the steeps have not all been levelled, nor all the hollow places filled up, and were the Man of Ross able to return to the town so indissolubly associated with him—the town he left for the Elysian Fields so long ago as 1724—he would still be able to recognise very much of what he would see.

I am going, here, in these pages, to tell the story of the Man of Ross, and to quote Pope's eulogy of him, because it may generally be found that that story and that poem are passed by with the wholly gratuitous assumption of their being familiar to every one. After all, Pope's "Moral Essays," in which that eulogy appears, are not every-day reading. The poet sets out with praise of the great ones of the earth, and then pulls up

with a jerk, metaphorically throwing his Pegasus upon its haunches:

But all our praises, why should Lords engross?
Rise, honest Muse! and sing the Man of Ross
Pleas'd Vaga echoes through her winding bounds,
And rapid Severn hoarse applause resounds.
Who hung with woods yon mountain's sultry brow?
From the dry rock who bade the waters flow?
Not to the skies in useless columns tost,
Or in proud falls magnificently lost,
But clear and artless, pouring through the plain,
Health to the sick, and solace to the swain.
Whose Causeway parts the vale with shady rows?
Whose seats the weary traveller repose?
Who taught that heaven-directed spire to rise?
"The Man of Ross," each lisping babe replies,
Behold the Market-place with poor o'erspread!
The Man of Ross divides the weekly bread:
He feeds yon Almshouse, neat, but void of state,
Where Age and Want sit smiling at the gate;
Him portion'd maids, apprentic'd orphans blest,
The young who labour, and the old who rest.
Is any sick? the Man of Ross relieves,
Prescribes, attends, the medicine makes, and gives.
Is there a variance? enter but his door,
Balk'd are the Courts, and contest is no more.
Despairing Quacks with curses fled the place,
And vile Attorneys, now an useless race.
Thrice happy man! enabled to pursue
What all so wish, but want the power to do!
Oh say, what sums that generous hand supply?
What mines to swell that boundless charity?
Of Debt and Taxes, Wife and Children clear,
This man possest—five hundred pounds a year.
Blush, Grandeur, blush! proud Courts, withdraw your blaze!
Ye little Stars! hide your diminished rays.
And what? no monument, inscription, stone?
His race, his form, his name almost unknown?

The Register enrolls him with his Poor,
Tells he was born, and died, and tells no more.
Just as he ought, he fill'd the space between;
Then stole to rest unheeded and unseen.

It is not the modern way. Philanthropy—and not seldom that philanthropy at four per cent., of the kind which builds model dwellings on a sound commercial basis—likes to see its name duly, not to say unduly, trumpeted abroad. Nor do the modern givers of Libraries while you Wait understand or encourage the anonymous methods of a Kyrle. Were Pope here now, he might find another kind of inspiration for his Muse, something in this sort:

Who bade that Public Library arise?
"What, can't you read?" the passer-by replies.
Socratic answer! There, above its door,
You see—and why not seen before?—
The flagrant letters, carved in bold array,
That "Carnegie," or "Passmore Edwards," say.
No bushel there, or screen, to hide their light;
They find the building—you provide the site.
Within that Muses' haunt, those modern gods,
The working men, are spelling out the odds,
Or read the "finals" and the racing-hints
Of tipsters subsidised by ha'p'ny prints.
There "Captain Coe" and "Busy Bee" preside,
While Pope and Tennyson are thrust aside.
Oh! bring a brush and ink, and swift erase
The "Sporting Notions" from their eager gaze.
But what is this that now compels our glance?
Is it a Circus, or a Fancy Dance?
No: 'tis a print of photographic art,
Where great Carnegie bears an honoured part:

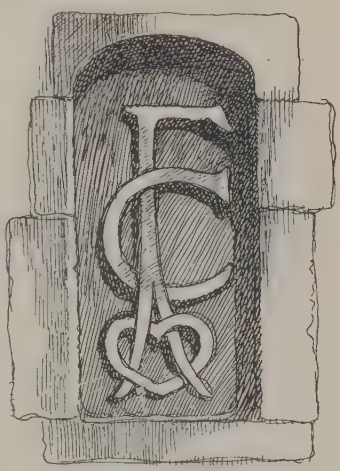
The Public Benefactor. Mr. Mayor
Poses beside him; filling up the rear
Stand Aldermen, in gowns of mazarine,
While at the sides the Fire Brigade are seen,
In brazen helmets, axes in their belts,
And great, long-legged boots, with clumsy welts.
What do they here, in this Galanty-show?
There is no fire. Indeed! you do not know,
Nor I. Perchance they're summon'd hence
To quench the fire of may'ral eloquence.
The Aldermen have axes too: you'll find
They all have metaphoric ones to grind;
Whether 'tis contracts snatched or not, 'tis sad
To find each one has brought his little fad.
"The public weal," they say, "compels." You sigh,
Or, if satiric, wink the other eye.
The Library Committee here is found;
Thrice-famous critics, whose great names resound.
Judge of how well they're fitted for the post:
They're pastrycooks, or builders, at the most,
And speak of books—the accusation sticks—
As such would do of tartlets or of bricks;
Or want to know—how well-informed are they!—
Why Shakespeare does not write another play;
Ask, "What are Keats?" "Is Bunyan ever read?"
And are surprised to hear Macaulay's dead.
Where's the Librarian? You do not know
Nor care. Why should he have a show?
Let him be hid! How dare he figure here!
He is no Alderman nor Millionaire,
Nor even Fireman. Of far humbler race,
His charge the books. Bid him go know his place!
Here close at hand a fulsome plate you see,
With praise of Edwards, or of Carnegie,
Who finds his wealth a sore and constant plague,
With dollars builds a Palace at the Hague
For Peace. Is Homestead yet forgot?
How Labour made his wealth? It matters not!
Ask him a Library; not alms instead:
He gives you books; does not distribute bread.

IX

John Kyrle, that Man, was not, as might be supposed from the title given him, a native of the town, but was born at Dymock, Gloucestershire, May 22nd, 1637. Genealogists think they trace his family back to the thirteenth century and out of England into Flanders. In 1295 there was a Robert Crul at Alton, near Ross, and Crulls, Crulles, Crylls, Curls, and Kyrls are numerous in the records of the shire. John Kyrle's father was a landowner and barrister, and the Man himself a member of Balliol College, read for the law, but seems never to have practised and to have been content to live his long life of eighty-eight years here at Ross, as a country gentleman, on an income of about £500 a year.

A red-faced, tall, loud-voiced, and hearty creature was John Kyrle. He lived in the long, rambling mansion still standing, looking upon the Market House. It became afterwards the "King's Arms" inn, and was long since divided into three houses with shops, its front plastered and concealing the timber framing obviously existing beneath. Between two of the windows on the first floor a portrait-medallion of Kyrle has been inserted. Here he kept open house, and practically took the town under his protection. We are not told that his natural cheerfulness was greatly obscured by the misfortunes of the Stuarts, but he was an ardent loyalist, and, when the red sandstone

Market House, that is now so rugged and time-worn, was built, in 1670, caused a bust of Charles II. to be sculptured for it. It was placed in a niche in one of the gable-ends, in a position where, to his grief, it was not visible from his windows. He accordingly had a curious anagram carved on the stones directly opposite, where, day by day, his eye might rest. It consists, as pictured here, of the letters F and C, entwined with a heart-shaped device, and is intended to mean "Faithful to Charles in Heart." That loyal soul lived to see the final catastrophe of the Stuarts and the coming of the Hanoverians, for he died in 1724. He does not owe that famous title of the "Man of Ross" to Pope, but to a friend who jestingly conferred it upon him in his lifetime. The line



"FAITHFUL TO CHARLES IN HEART."

> Who hung with woods yon mountain's sultry brow?

refers to his planting his property, the cliff-like Cleave-field banks overlooking the Wye, sometimes called Little Wood, and to his laying out the "Prospect," amid which the Royal Hotel now

stands, in paths, arbours, and bowers. The "Prospect" was not his own, but leased by him from Lord Weymouth in 1693 for a term of five hundred years. In 1848 the public right of user in this pleasance was denied, and only vindicated after

ROSS MARKET-HOUSE.

ten years' litigation, resulting in its being conveyed to the town in perpetuity.

From the dry rock who bade the waters flow?

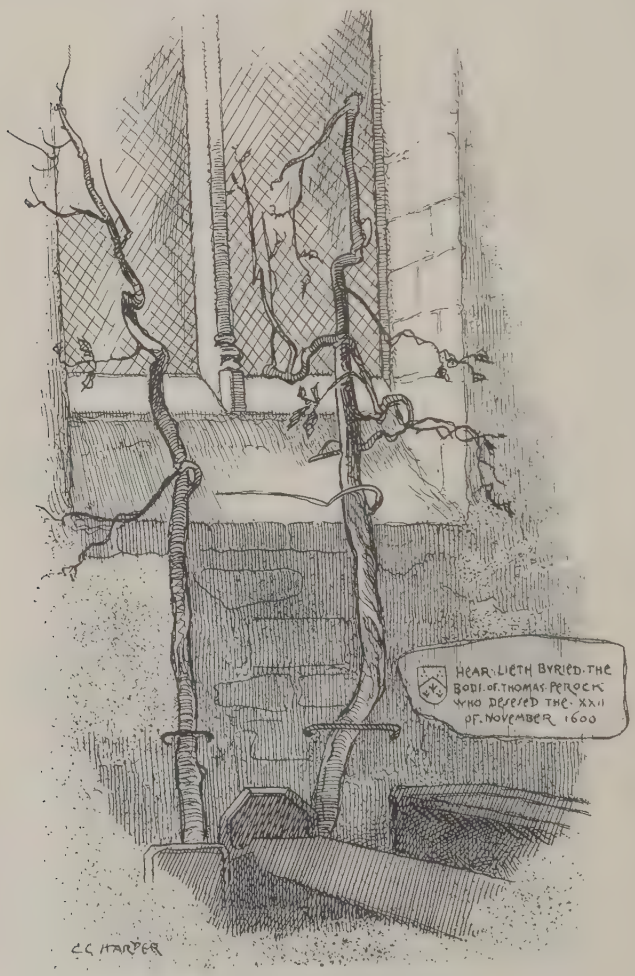
This was the first public water-supply of the town, obtained from a conduit made in the "Prospect" at his cost and that of other prominent inhabitants. Hence the water was conducted to standpipes

in the streets. The reference to the Causeway is to the way to Wilton Bridge; and here again, although he was the prime mover in it, he was but one of many who contributed towards the cost.

He "taught that heaven-directed spire to rise" in but a strictly limited sense, for the beautiful tapering stone spire of Ross church was in existence before his time. The upper part of it being in a shaky condition, he caused a parish meeting to be convened, and, in the result, a length of about forty-seven feet was taken down and rebuilt under his personal supervision. He was, indeed, very much of an amateur architect, and liked nothing better than to design and alter buildings, often content to lend money without interest to those who were contemplating dabbling in bricks and mortar, on the sole condition that he was allowed to design and superintend the work.

In other ways Kyrle was a true Herefordshire man, keen to plant trees where trees had not grown before, and devoted to horticulture. With spade on his shoulder, a bottle in his pocket, and a watering-pot in his hand, he would walk between his house and the fields several times a day, watering with his own hands the trees he had newly set. His favourite tree was the elm, and with it he planted not only the Causeway, but also the churchyard, where fine specimens, some of his planting, still remain, although fast decaying of old age. It is this fondness of his for the elm which has invested with such great affection and

almost superstitious reverence the two elm-suckers that many years ago, when one of the trees he



ELM-TREES IN ROSS CHURCH.

had planted was cut down, sprang up from underneath the flooring of his pew in the church, and

have since grown into tall saplings. They appear now to be dead, but are jealously preserved from injury. His architectural taste is to be judged from his Gateway, between the churchyard and the "Prospect," bearing his entwined initials and dated 1700. One of the bells of the church was given by him, and still bears the date, 1692, and his name. He was a lifelong bachelor, and in many ways singularly resembles Praed's "Quince." This man of wide sympathies and general benefactor and cause of benefactions and good deeds in others died, like Quince, solely of extreme old age. His body lay in state for nine days in that church wherein every day he had worshipped, and was buried before the altar; but, as we read in Pope's indignant lines, it was long before any memorial was raised to him. Not until 1749 was even the plain blue ledger-stone, simply inscribed "John Kyrle, Esq., 7th November, 1724, æt. 88," placed over his grave; nor the mural monument, with portrait bust, "In Memory of Mr. John Kyrle, commonly called the Man of Ross," until 1776.

X

HEREFORDSHIRE has ever been a loyal shire, and the town of Ross has not differed from it, but loyalty was sore shaken in 1821, when George IV. came through from Milford Haven. The broad sweep of road by which one now gradually ascends into the town from Wilton Bridge was not

then in existence, and the mail- and stage-coaches, the post-chaises and chariots, the wagons, and indeed all descriptions of traffic, crawled painfully up into, or down out of, Ross by the extremely steep and dangerous Dock Pitch, Dean Hill, and Corps Cross. The King's equipage on this occasion was going up along, when it was brought to a long halt by a carrier's cart come to grief in the narrow way. In any case, the Mayor of Ross had intended to welcome the King, and had that First Gentleman in Europe been a long-suffering personage, content to sit and be bored and look as gracious as possible under trying circumstances, that Mayor would have had a lengthy interview; but Florizel was not always a gracious King, and on this occasion rudely pulled down the blinds. Frankly, my sympathies are with the King, for Mr. Mayor was about to read his Majesty an Address. The spot where this unarranged-for halt was made is marked by an inn that even yet bears the sign of the "George IV.'s Rest."

In 1833 the new road was dug and blasted out of the rock under the "Prospect," and travellers by coach ceased to leave Ross for Monmouth with a prayer on their lips and their hearts in their mouths; unless, indeed, it were flood-time, when the old dangers of the Wye, in spate down below, awaited them along the flooded causeway, when prayers, aided by cautious driving, would not be superfluous. Shady rows of elm still in part line the way, but I dare not say they are Kyrle's. They lead on to that sturdy old pont, Wilton

Bridge, built in 1599 in the old Gothic manner, with narrow roadway provided with sanctuaries for pedestrians in the angles of the piers. Those who built here and thus superseded the ford which, guarded on the thither side by Wilton Castle, had kept many an enemy at bay, doubtless thought civil strife was come to an end; but there

WILTON BRIDGE.

were men among them who lived to witness the contrary, for it was but forty-five years later, in the course of the struggle between Royalists and Roundheads, that it was found necessary by the King's men to demolish the arch nearest Wilton. The few ivied ruins of Wilton Castle, which with the little village give a title to the Earl of Wilton

and that of Viscount Grey de Wilton to his eldest son, represent the original fortress built in the reign of King Stephen as a defence in advance of the ford, against the Welsh. But although the place still confers a title, it passed from that family, by sale, more than two hundred years ago, and is now owned by Guy's Hospital. It was still occupied, and a place of considerable strength, when those seventeenth-century troubles broke out. Sir John Brydges was then the owner, and was engaged in lengthily weighing the chances of either party and trying to make up his mind whose cause he should espouse, when it was seized and burnt by Sir Barnabas Scudamore and Sir Henry Lingen, to "cure Sir Facing-bothe-Wayes of that neutralitie soe hurtefull to the King his ease, and soe greatlie to the encouragement of ye Rebells in these parts." He was so effectually cured of that neutrality that he continued their enemy to his dying-day.

An ornate pillar standing in one of the sanctuaries of the bridge, and bearing four sundials, is inscribed, in the moral manner suitable to sundials:

> Esteem thy precious time,
> Which pass so soon away;
> Prepare then for Eternity,
> And do not make delay.

Lower Wear and Upper Wear lead steeply up out of the Wye Valley, with distant views of Goodrich Castle on its wooded bluff, and of Good-

rich Court, Sir Samuel Meyrick's pinnacled and turreted creation of the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Then we come, at Pencraig, to the hill-crest. There is, to those versed in the meaning of place-names, much eloquence, and an exquisite fitness, in that of Pencraig. The experienced explorer of the roads little needs the "Contour Books" issued for cyclists. He scans his map and deduces from riverside roads an almost certain flatness; from a track that wriggles its way across his chart he suspects plenteous hill-climbing, and finds in place-names very obvious hints. Here, at "Pencraig," for instance, he expects to find a hill-crest, and accordingly he presently, after much hill-climbing, does so find it.

The hamlet of Pencraig is more notable for the imposing gateway to Goodrich Court than for anything else. It is a gateway imposing in more than one sense of that word, for those are few who, suddenly encountering these red sandstone towers, built in the style of military architecture prevailing in the reign of Edward I., do not suppose themselves to be really in the presence of a genuine, but exceptionally well preserved, mediæval entrance to a castle. This is by way of being a compliment to that distinguished antiquary, Sir Samuel Meyrick, and his architect; and in truth those great drum towers, like those genuinely ancient ones of the Castle of St. Briavel's, on the other side of the Wye, from which they seem to be modelled, are, with their extinguisher-shaped roofs, very like the real thing. The weathering

they have withstood for some eighty years cunningly aids the illusion.

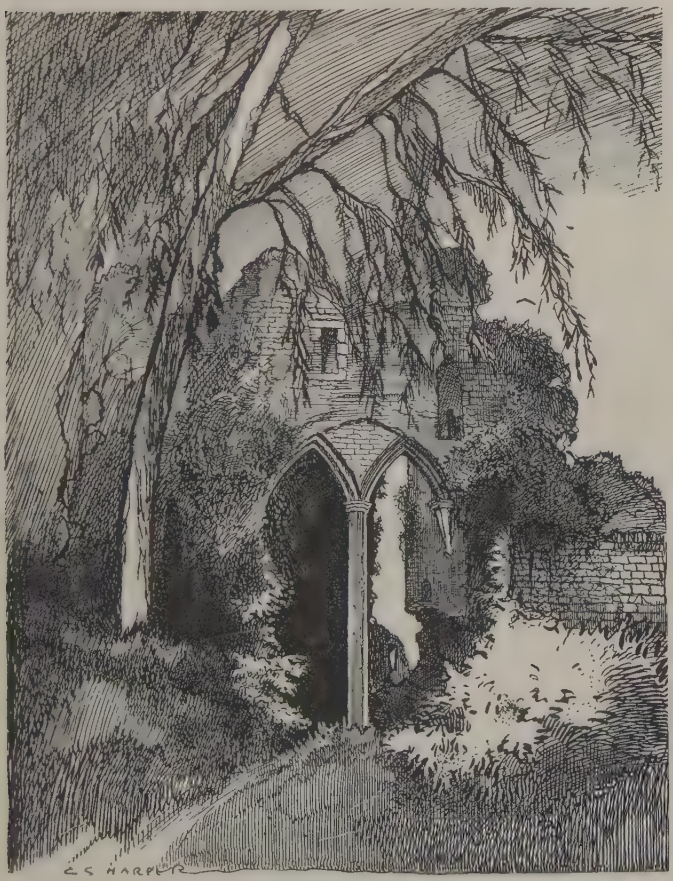
XI

Goodrich Castle, of which Goodrich Court is in a sense an imitation, is a roofless, owl-haunted ruin, and has been so ever since Colonel Birch, fighting for the Parliament, reduced it in the great siege of 1646. He planted his forces on the opposite, or Gloucestershire, banks of the Wye, whence his iron termagant, "Roaring Meg," a marvellous piece of ordnance for that time, flung granadoes, or, as we should say, shells, weighing two hundredweight upon the castle walls, eventually bringing down one of the towers and bringing out the garrison of loyal country gentlemen with offers of surrender. The late Norman keep was made of sterner masonry, and did not yield to the fierce advances of Meg, but it suffered, with the rest of the fortress, when given over to Birch's men. It had already given them too much trouble for them to run any risk of its being used again.

The Castle is in many parts just a mass of ruined walls whose functions can only be dimly guessed at; but there is one little gem, the object to which the efforts of every artist and every amateur photographer are directed. This is that pretty peep upon the distant landscape through the surviving arches of the Castle Hall, to which you come over grassy and ferny mounds, overhung

by trees, where the lords of Goodrich once kept state.

Great state was maintained by those fierce



GOODRICH CASTLE.

Lords Marchers. Their responsibilities, as keepers of the ferry across the Wye into England, were heavy, and their territorial and military import-

ance was in like measure. For Goodrich Castle, built as an advance post above the western, or Welsh, bank of the Wye, was originally, like Wilton Castle, a rather daring enterprise. Not content with remaining on the English banks of that river, there to await any incursions of the Welsh, its first builders planted themselves in what was then Wales itself, already looking with prophetic and greedy eyes upon the time when they should be strong enough further to extend the English rule.

There has never been any love lost between the English and the Welsh, probably because the two races quite fail to understand one another's qualities and defects. In the time of the Saxon invasion, when wars were wars of extermination, there was, of course, no attempt at any such understanding, and the English and the Welsh hated one another, individually as well as collectively, with such a bitter hatred, that Offa, whose dyke divided the English territories from the Welsh, prescribed mutilation and death for any Welshman overpassing his earthen boundary in the north, or the Wye, the continuation of it, in the south. Surrounding place-names still reflect that ancient condition of affairs, and here, in the neighbourhoods of Goodrich and Monmouth, the interested stranger will find, for example, the village of Walford, or "Wales ford," on the Gloucestershire side, with English Bicknor, and a great company of English names; while on the Welsh side of the Wye are Welsh Bicknor and a great number

of purely Welsh names, among a sprinkling of English.

Goodrich village owns a curiosity of more than common interest. Near the "Cross Keys" inn stands the singular old building known as the "Tripod House," a name given it in an attempt to describe its ground-plan, which is that of a central hall, whence three wings radiate, equi-

THE "TRIPOD HOUSE," GOODRICH.

distant. The author of this whimsical attempt at typifying the Trinity in the plan of a dwelling-house was the Reverend Thomas Swift, Vicar of Goodrich in the early part of the seventeenth century. His initials, "T. S.," and the date 1636, appear on the walls. His grandson, the famous wit and satirist, Dean Swift, in his autobiography alludes to his ancestor's freak in building, and says, "Its architecture denotes the builder to have

been somewhat whimsical and singular, and very much towards a projector."

The Reverend Thomas Swift died in 1656, weighted with the troubles that beset loyal folks in those turbulent times of civil war. He was a devoted Royalist, and therefore a marked man—so marked, indeed, that his odd house is said to have been pillaged no fewer than twenty times by the Parliamentary troops, who also raided his cattle. It must have been ill gleaning towards the close of that series of visits, or else the earlier pillagers poor hands at ransacking.

XII

From Goodrich the road continues to Old Forge, where another road goes off to Kerne Bridge. Here in the hollow we cross the River Garan and come to the village of Whitchurch, remarkable for nothing so much as the close likeness of the village street to an untidy farmyard. It is in this respect a foretaste of Wales, and has all the Cymric-cum-Hibernian air which characterises alike the villages of the Principality and of Ireland.

From Whitchurch the way lies up a very long and steep hill to Ganarew, where, passing a dilapidated wayside cross at a junction of roads, Herefordshire is left behind and Monmouthshire entered. Here the road, at a great height, overhangs the Wye, sheltered by heavy masses of

foliage which only now and again permit glimpses of the river, winding far down below, with the tangled brakes and underwoods of Wyaston Leys descending to its devious tide. Here and there almost doubling upon itself, the way now descends in S-shaped curves once more to the levels, and,

NEAR MONMOUTH.

passing in full view of the nobly wooded hills of the Gloucestershire side, comes to Dixton, on the outskirts of Monmouth town.

Comes to Dixton, I say. Yet the traveller, content to keep to the broad high road, might well ask where Dixton is to be found, for, passing the unfenced brakes and spinneys that rise skyward

on the right, with only a narrow strip of meadow-land on the left between himself and the river, the neighbourhood is particularly rural and solitary. Dixton must be sought on what has been a by-road since the "new" turnpike was made into Monmouth in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The beginning of that new cut is still marked by a very imposing dark red sandstone toll-house. Here, if you bear to the left, Dixton, by favour of the little stone spire of its charming old church, will presently be found. That ever it should have been named a "ton," or town, seems a whimsical thing to the casual stranger, to whom a town means none other than a populous place of, let us say, no fewer than two thousand inhabitants. A reference to the census returns would probably show Dixton to be a parish of fewer than two hundred, and neither shop nor inn—and surely no place which cannot boast a public-house can be styled more than a hamlet—is to be found. Not even a village street, but only a few scattered houses and the church, make up the sum-total of Dixton.

Let it then be said that Dixton is as much a town, according to the original significance of "ton," as any place of fifty thousand or more inhabitants. It is we who have given a new meaning to that Anglo-Saxon word, which was never misplaced here. When the English came across the Wye and founded their settlement in these pleasant meadows, they enclosed it within a hedge, or "tun," as a protection against who

shall say what dangers of those early times. Thus, in like fashion, the many places whose names end in "tun" acquired that suffix. They were all protected within some kind of enclosure, and it is only the accidents of centuries that have caused the development of many of these simple

DIXTON CHURCH.

enclosures into what we call towns. There are many more hamlets and villages, and even simple farmsteads, whose names end with "ton" than there are crowded towns; and those insignificant places are not decayed and shrunk from a former greatness, but are simply the original Anglo-

Saxon settlements which, from a variety of causes, have never developed.

Here, at Dixton, we have an instance. In the close neighbourhood of Monmouth there was no chance of development, and so the place has remained very much as it always must have been.

The humble little white-plastered church, yet not so humble but that it has an air of distinction peculiarly its own, stands on the banks of the Wye. Gloire de Dijon roses clamber over the quaint porch, like a cottage and roofed with rough and massive stone slates; and among the memorials of the dead are those of many whom the water-gods of Wye and Monnow have claimed.

The tall spire of St. Mary's Church, Monmouth, is clearly seen from here, for it is but a mile into the centre of the town.

XIII

Monmouth, the county town and a considerable place, has some dignified pretensions in its grandly named Agincourt Square, where the heavy Shire Hall, with grey stone front and a singularly ugly bronze statue of Henry V., proclaims the seat of local government. The victor of Agincourt looks out, in a very tottery, top-heavy manner, from his niche high up in the frontage, while below him is another reminder of our martial prowess in the shape of a cannon captured from the Russians.

Monmouth very properly cherishes the memory of Henry V., for, as the inscription on that statue reminds those not already mindful of that historic fact, he was born here, in Monmouth Castle. Shakespeare himself lends point to it, in his play of *Henry V.*, where Captain Gower, at Agincourt, says:

"O, 'tis a gallant king!"

"Ay, he was porn at Monmouth, Captain Gower," replies Fluellen, whose name represents the Shakespearean way of pronouncing the Welsh "Llewelyn." "What call you the town's name where Alexander the Pig was born?"

GOWER: "Alexander the Great."

FLUELLEN: "Why, I pray you, is not pig great? the pig, or the great, or the mighty, or the huge, or the magnanimous, are all one reckonings, save the phrase is a little variations."

GOWER: "I think Alexander the Great was born in Macedon: his father was called Philip of Macedon, as I take it."

FLUELLEN: "I think it is in Macedon where Alexander is porn. I tell you, captain, if you look in the maps of the 'orld, I warrant you sall find, in the comparisons between Macedon and Monmouth, that the situations, look you, is both alike. There is a river in Macedon; and there is also moreover a river at Monmouth: it is called Wye at Monmouth; but it is out of my prains what is the name of the other river; but 'tis all one, 'tis alike as my fingers is to my fingers, and there is salmons in both."

"All the water in Wye cannot wash your Majesty's Welsh plood out of your pody," said Fluellen to the King, and Shakespeare's correct way of rendering the Welsh custom of referring to that river reminds us in timely fashion that the Welsh never speak, as we do, of "the Wye," but of "Wye."

MONMOUTH CASTLE.

Very little is left of Monmouth Castle. Henry's cradle is still preserved at the Duke of Beaufort's seat, Troy House, by the River Trothy, outside the town, but only a ruined wall or two, with fragments of traceried windows, remain to remind us of his birthplace. The castle precincts are still used as military quarters, for Monmouth is a depôt, and there, on the broad parade-ground in

front of the beautiful but neglected and hardly-used Renaissance building now generally called "the Castle," built in 1673, you may see squads, awkward or other, companies, and battalions drilling. Oftener, the British soldiers, since the Boer War no longer smart, may be seen lounging listlessly, in every circumstance of squalor and untidiness. They loll, they smoke, they thrust dirty hands into bulgeous pockets, they go unshaven and unbuttoned, with one trouser-leg in boots, the other not: no two dress precisely alike, and the khaki of one has a greenish hue, while that of others is sometimes of a rather stale mustard colour and sometimes the hue of russet apples. The whole unlovely picture exactly reflects the Brodrick regime of incapacity and futility.

Another celebrity was born at Monmouth, considerably earlier than Henry V., in the person of Geoffrey of Monmouth, the monkish chronicler of early British days, to whom we owe much of our information about King Arthur, if that can be called information which is merely legendary lore respecting a person who probably never had any corporeal existence, or, if he had, was doubtless not the least bit like the hero of Malory, Tennyson, and others. Geoffrey was born about 1100, and died, Bishop of St. Asaph, in 1154. The Priory, in which he may have written his highly imaginative history, has long been demolished, excepting one very beautiful Decorated oriel window of what is now a schoolroom. It is of the archi-

tectural style prevailing more than two hundred years after Geoffrey's death, but that little discrepancy does not prevent its still being shown as "Geoffrey's Study."

The centre of Monmouth is a complex mass of narrow streets bordered by tall dark houses. There stands the "White Swan," as of yore, an immense house, with its hard-featured courtyards where, not the stage-coaches of yore and the railway omnibuses of to-day, but the "black Maria," the prison van, would seem more in keeping with the stern look of the place. A traveller in the old times might, if appearances went for anything, have expected, not "his ease at his inn," but durance and little ease and a scant allowance of skilly awaiting him within such grim walls.

From this nucleus of darkling lanes, rather than streets, a long broad street descends to the Monnow, the courts leading numerously out of it on either side adding to the rather down-at-heel and shabby air which forcibly strikes the traveller from London. But it is not sufficient, for a proper comprehension of the road, to travel one way along it. A return journey is necessary, to correct impressions gained on the outward trip, and thus, by the light of added knowledge, to moderate views already formed. Thus, Monmouth, to the stranger going west, seems to plumb the depths of squalor; but it gains in one's estimation on returning, for the further west one goes, the more ugly and wretched grow the Welsh

towns, and the pilgrim, impressed by this phenomenon, can only wonder to what depths they might descend if Wales extended, say, another hundred miles.

It is good to see Wales, as it is good to see any other foreign country, for Wales is essentially foreign; but it is good also to return to England and the familiar English tongue. You come back from it as a traveller from abroad, from a land where people do not really understand you, nor you them, to your own folk, where you are not under the necessity of repeating most things three or four times, even then to be only dimly comprehended.

XIV

To leave Monmouth town we must needs cross the River Monnow, originally the Welsh "Mynwy," the small water, which acts as godfather to the place, and here, at the foot of the long street, comes presently to its confluence with the Wye, in company with the Trothy. Wye here means "water," or, taken in relation with "Mynwy," *the* water, the larger and more important of several streams. The world sensibly shrinks when we compare place-names, often paralleled in distant countries; and here, in the name of the Monnow, we find a likeness to that of the Minho, a river in Portugal.

The Monnow was a not inconsiderable factor in the defence of the town in the old days, running

deeply as it did on the west and south sides, as does the broader and deeper Wye on the east. Here, where the ancient red sandstone bridge still spans the stream, remains the only one among the defensible gates of the old fortified town. It was a happy exception to the general tale of demolition that preserved this gatehouse, which once bade all undesirable visitors "halt!" here, on the threshold of the town; and if they would not halt was strong to enforce its command, in every military circumstance of iron-braced doors, narrow slits for cross-bow shafts, and machicolated overhead openings through which an enemy, battering at those doors, could be bathed in a douche of the melted lead or boiling oil that formed such important items in the equipment of a mediæval garrison. There is no other bridge gateway so fine in England. It is old enough to have witnessed the passing of Henry V., and has often been held in readiness for defence, the last occasion more recent than many would suppose.

It was in 1839, when the Chartist agitation was causing riots in England and considerable anxiety to be felt by the Government of that day. Chartism manifested itself all over the country, but nowhere so violently as in South Wales. We see in our own time the extremes to which the excitable and none too well-ballasted Welsh will proceed, in the hysterical scenes of religious revival; in 1839 their easily inflamed passions flung them into the extremity of armed rebellion, while the more stolid Englishman was content to

vapour his political heresies away in talk. Newport, Monmouthshire, was the chief place of Welsh agitation, for there lived John Frost, apart from his extravagant Chartism a quiet and amiable man, following the unwarlike trade of a draper. Aided by other enthusiasts, he planned an armed attack on that town on the night of

MONNOW BRIDGE.

Sunday, November 3rd, when he and his lieutenants marched three divisions of colliers, iron-workers, and others, numbering ten thousand men, furnished with muskets, pikes, iron bars and sticks, to the Westgate Hotel, and boldly attacked the special constables and a company of soldiers placed there to keep order. The attack was to be the spark to provoke a rising throughout the country. By a

preconcerted arrangement, the mail-coach leaving Newport for Usk, Monmouth, and Birmingham was to be stopped, and its non-arrival at Monmouth to be taken as the signal for revolt, to be spread far and wide by secret agents. But the attack upon the authorities at Newport was a failure. In that forlorn hope twenty-two of the revolutionaries were killed, and the rest fled. The coach performed its journey as usual, the country was not roused, and Chartism in South Wales was dead.

During all that time Monmouth town was greatly exercised on account of the threats against property made by the excited Chartists, and when Frost and the ringleaders were arrested and lodged in Monmouth Gaol, the old gateway was once more garrisoned against a rumoured attempt at rescue. Much talk was heard of a night attack, and the gates were closed and barricaded, loopholes made in the old walls for musketry, and everything placed in readiness to meet the foe. But no attack was ever made, and Frost and other prominent Chartists were duly tried. Sentenced to death, the penalty was commuted to penal servitude, and the prisoners were despatched to Chepstow, and thence aboard ship without further trouble.

In the year 1900 the old Monnow gatehouse was presented by the ninth Duke of Beaufort to the Monmouthshire County Council, and has since been slightly repaired, without any attempt made to reface it, or spoil its time-worn appearance.

Here we are in the suburb of Over Monnow, with a modern cross in the centre of the road and the overmuch restored Norman church of St. Thomas on the left. To the left hand goes the splendidly engineered road of about 1820 to Abergavenny, by way of Mitchel Troy and Raglan, but the old road turns sharply to the right, by Drybridge Street. Here a number of old inns grouped together point to this having been the old way of the traffic, while the absence of any along the beginning of the newer road shows how there was no time for changes before the railways came, and old roads and new were for two generations robbed of their life and movement.

The stranger at Monmouth, seeking the old road, is looked upon with curiosity, and if he be a cyclist is warned off it with many a shake of the head. The truth is that it is, after all the terrible tales of hills and the ruggedness of the way, not nearly so bad as the Monmouth people would have you believe. It is their unconscious habit of antithesis that describes it in such unfavourable terms. They are thinking all the while of the excellences of the newer road, which throw into relief the drawbacks of the old; and in general the main roads of Monmouthshire are so excellent that they spoil the people for those of anything less than perfection. In especial, this original way, although hilly and full of sharp turns, may be described as no whit worse than many of the main roads of Devon, Dorset, and Cornwall, where

those faults are taken as matters of course, inseparable from hilly districts.

XV

Disregarding, therefore, the almost awestruck warnings of those who from Monmouth's streets point out the distant, frowning hills, where the old road takes its way, and discounting the alarming prediction that we "will never do it," we essay the task, and, without making our last wills and testaments, but yet somewhat impressed with such warnings, not unlike those offered to the Alpine climber in "Excelsior," leave Monmouth and disappear into the wilds for a distance of eight miles.

The hills begin at once, after passing Drybridge House, and the way grows narrow. Jingle Street, a wayside group of old cottages, and Trowan Hill are passed, with Treowen on the right hand, out of sight across the fields. Treowen, now a farmhouse, was long a manorial residence, and is rich in oak panelling, winding staircases, and nearly all the inconveniences of such places. But it lacks a ghost. The front is singularly beautiful, designed in the manner of Inigo Jones, and indeed attributed to him, and the elaborate porch is decorated with a shield of many quarterings, tracing the descent of the Joneses of Treowen back to the Marcher lords of Norman times.

Wonastow church here stands by the wayside, with its squat tower and stunted roof looking more like a typical Hampshire church than anything to be expected in Monmouthshire. It is dedicated to St. Wonnow, who thus seems to give a name to the parish and to Wonastow Court, here overlooking the River Trothy.

Wonastow Court, in whose grounds the church stands, was once a residence of the Herberts, and was built in the time of Henry VI. In the troubles of the seventeenth century it was garrisoned by that loyal family for the King, but fell to treachery. The domestic chapel of old time now fulfils a useful office in the kitchen department.

The road now swoops steeply down into Dingestow, where it crosses a narrow bridge over the Trothy in a wooded dingle, and then with a sharp right-hand turn rises as steeply again. This, then, is the steepest and most awkward part of the old road, and must have been extremely dangerous for coaches. As the newer road so thoroughly diverted the traffic, there has been little or no occasion to make improvements here, and so we see very much the same state of affairs at this point as existed in the old days. Still runs the dangerous, unbridged watersplash by the hill-crest yonder, and here, at an acute angle, by the few cottages at the bridge in the dingle, is the dirty, if not deep, pond, in which incautious drivers, or others unused to this route, coming from Abergavenny to Monmouth, frequently drove.

Overlooking this spot is the church of Dingestow, placed on a bank above the Trothy. The original name of the place now survives only in the dusty memories of antiquaries. When the Welsh yet occupied these borders it was Llandingat, the Church of St. Dingat, just as Wonastow probably was Llanwonnow; but the English so long since forced the Welsh back from the neighbourhood of Monmouth upon their mountains, that the name of their village has been altered to the hybrid Celtic and Saxon form of Dinge's Stow, or stockade, the primitive fortified form of a village in the debatable lands. The church has even been rededicated, and is now that of St. Mary.

Close by are the few grassy mounds that mark where Dingestow Castle once stood. That fortress was built by the ferocious William de Braose, Lord of Abergavenny and many other lordships, in the twelfth century. His also were the great strategic castles of Skenfrith, Grosmont, and White Castle, in the northern part of Monmouthshire. He was busily engaged in completing that very strong chain of defences when he was attacked here by the Welsh, eager to revenge themselves for his treacherous murder of their chieftains in the bloodstained castle of Abergavenny. My lord was on the scaffoldings and unfinished walls of Dingestow, consulting with his seneschal, Ranulf Poer, amid the masons, when the Welsh suddenly sprang upon them and slew right and left. The seneschal, who had stood at the side of de Braose, was killed, and de Braose himself wounded and

buried beneath a heap of dead, whence, when the attack had with difficulty been repulsed, he was dragged.

Passing the turreted pile of Dingestow Court, the road now opens out for the first time upon striking views of the Welsh mountains. There to the right is the monstrous isolated mass of the Skyrrid Fawr, or Holy Mountain, rising 1,498 feet

TREGARE.

above the vale to the north of Abergavenny. Its Welsh name, meaning the "great fissure," derives from mystic legends that its two parts, sundered by a deep ravine, were separated by an earthquake at the time of the Crucifixion. The summit was sacred to St. Michael, to whom a chapel there was dedicated. To that shrine, every Michaelmas, went the peasantry in the days of Roman Catholic superstition; and long after those ignorant customs of pilgrimage and their attendant orgies had

become things outworn and forgotten, the farmers and cottagers of Monmouthshire were credulous enough to store great quantities of earth dug from the ravine, so that they might always have a supply of it for sprinkling their houses, fields, stables, and pigsties. So sprinkled, they thought, no evil could befall their roof-trees, their crops, their horses, or pigs. If the ploughlands were strewn with it, then the crops would be abundant, and many imaginary horrors were averted by dusting graves and coffins with it. To-day the farmers rely upon phosphates and marling for the augmentation of crops, the authorities are not satisfied with this sprinkling method of preventing or curing swine-fever, and people in general have arrived at the wholesome conclusion that no post-mortem efforts, but only good works, or at the least of it, timely repentance, can save erring souls from being damned.

XVI

The little church of Tregare (? Tre Gaer, the Place of the Camp) is now passed, the old farm-house of Llwyn-y-Gaer, or Camp Wood, an ancient moated house, visible amid its trees away on a rise to the right. Remains of the moat, over whose still and black waters you pass by a plank bridge, still partly surround the house. Thick and clumsy doors, studded with iron, echoing flagstones in the lower rooms, and thick walls

proclaim an old-time strength; while an upstairs room whose ceiling is beautifully decorated with rich plaster-work in high relief is an assurance that this was once the residence of people of no mean estate. A legend, never yet verified, nor likely ever to be, says the house was visited by Charles I. during the Civil War.

The next village is that of Bryngwyn ("White Hill"), where a few cottages coyly hide down a by-road, leaving only the parish church and a chance house or two to represent the place along the highway. A small oak tree that does not look its age of close upon seventy years stands where main road and by-way meet, opposite the church, and round this tree a wooden seat has been made, in the old English village fashion. A near approach discloses it to be a memorial, with the inscription running round it:

> Erected by old members of the B.C.C. in Memory of Archdeacon Crawley, who planted this tree in the year 1837. And of Charles Crawley, Cptn Bryngwyn Cricket Club. Drowned in the "Wye" 1889.

The Venerable Archdeacon Crawley held the living from 1834, for over sixty years.

At the fork of the roads at Cross Bychan, where an inn stood in coaching-days, the road to Abergavenny bears to the right, and leads at length out of these heights down into the valley of the Usk, through the deep cutting of Clytha Hill, where the tree-shaded scene, including a

rustic bridge over the cutting, greatly resembles the cutting through Headington Hill, entering Oxford. An imposing castellated building on the hill-top, to the left, is the mausoleum of the Herberts of Clytha, whose mansion, with nothing castellated about it, stands in the park below, in the level lands beside the Usk. A flat stretch of road presently brings us to the junction with the newer highway from Monmouth by way of Raglan, at the "Swan" inn, overlooking the river. This spot is marked in old maps as "Rhyd-y-Gravel," or perhaps more properly "Grafel," the "Ford of the Ruffian." *What* ruffian is indicated history does not tell us.

The road to Milford Haven runs for thirty-six miles from this point along the valley of the Usk, sometimes beside the river, sometimes crossing it, for long stretches in view of its bright waters, and never for long wholly away from it. It is only at Trecastle that we shall bid it, there an infant stream, prattling from its source in the Carmarthenshire Black Mountains, good-bye. In all the intervening country its moisture clothes the valleys underneath the savage mountains with verdure, and it lends, with the quaint bridges that often cross the stream, a picturesqueness to many an otherwise dull town or village, undistinguished by antiquity and not reached by architectural graces. At Abergavenny we shall see a long bridge crossing a broad river; at Crickhowell thirteen arches are required to carry the road across; at Brecon seven suffice; and so, as we

proceed, the span grows ever more narrow, until a single arch is enough, and at Trecastle it is even possible to cross by stepping-stones.

There would seem at first sight little in common between the Usk and whisky. A Good Templar could drink of the one, while, if true to his pledge, he must abstain from the other. Yet the names of both are fundamentally the same. Both derive from the Celtic *uisg*, or *uisge*, meaning water, the root whence come the names of Exe, Axe, Esk, and other streams; and the name of whisky is but a clipped and mutilated survival of that of *Uisgebaugh*, or "yellow water," by which that spirit was first known.

XVII

The road has now brought the traveller fairly into the country of the "Llans." On every side the map is plentifully studded with place-names beginning in that manner; but if we remember that "llan" is the Welsh word for church, we shall not only cease to feel any surprise at their number, but, considering that a church is a usual feature in a village, will even stand—like Clive on an historic occasion—astonished at the moderation of the Welsh in not decorating with this prefix every parish in their country. Four "Llans" immediately appear on the way to Abergavenny, but are not immediately situated on the road. The first is Llanvair Kilgidin, across the

Usk, followed by Llansaintfraed, off the road, to the right, and then by Llanvihangel-nigh-Usk and Llangattock-nigh-Usk, both again across the river. They are, severally, St. Mary's, Saint Fraed's, St. Michael-the-Archangel's, and St. Cattoc's churches. The dedications to St. Michael in Wales seems to point to a great popularity of that saint among Welshmen, for his churches rival in number those of St. Mary herself. There are no fewer than thirty-nine Llanvihangels of different kinds in the Principality.

This, too, is the country of many other names perplexing to the Englishman, and we are soon assured of that fact by passing, on the way to Abergavenny, a wayside railway-station named "Penpergwm." The name has a very ugly aspect to any one but a Welshman, and looks unpronounceable, but it is quite easy, when you know how, and means, very poetically, "Head of the Sweet Vale"—a vale which runs south, to Llanover.

Now comes the entrance to Abergavenny, downhill, overshaded by trees, and the roadside dotted with villas; for Abergavenny is a considerable place, large enough to have the beginnings of "residential" suburbs. Directly facing the approaching traveller, and heralding the town, is the grey tower of the priory church, backed by the volcanic-looking peak of the Sugarloaf Mountain, nearly four miles distant, but seeming, in certain atmospheric effects of this wild country, almost to overhang the town. It is the crowning and most prominent height of this vale, alike by

its measurement of 1,954 feet, and by the isolation of its position and sharply peaked summit.

To the south Abergavenny and the Vale of Usk are hemmed in by the huddled mass of

ENTRANCE TO ABERGAVENNY.

mountains of which the Blorenge is a conspicuous member. Across those stern and lofty heights, shut off by the natural barrier they form, are the coal-fields and the great centres of industry of

South Wales; so different, in every way, from the pastoral and agricultural pursuits of these valleys that they, to all intents and purposes, belong to another world. Scarce eight miles across those wild heights of limestone peaks and iron-hard knobs of millstone grit, at the beginnings of the watershed whence innumerable streams pour their course down deep gullies from due north to south into the Bristol Channel at Neath, Swansea, Cardiff, and smaller ports, are the grimy, hard-featured collieries and iron-works of Ebbw Vale and Pontypool, but nor sight, scent, nor sound of them comes athwart that kindly barrier of Nature, and Abergavenny nestles, untainted from smoke and dirt, peaceful in a land of flocks and herds.

Distance lends a mysterious softness to the hulking Blorenge, away to the left, on the other side of the Usk, and in the deep folds and hollows of the mountain-sides, where the sunshine fails to penetrate, a blue shadow lingers, even at midday. There, like some ancient crater, blasted out of those mighty shoulders by forces long extinct, is the Punchbowl, and the scars and wounds of bygone cataclysms combine with the ravines and dingles slowly made by glacier and mountain-stream to give the Blorenge something the look of an ancient warrior, worn by age and the chances of a hundred contested fields.

Such are the surroundings of Abergavenny, placed, like some spectator at a panorama, full in view of striking and impressive scenery. When it is a period of sunshine, Abergavenny basks in a

mellow heat; when the mists gather and disperse in those homes of rains and vapours, the townsmen, if they have souls for such things, are free of a beautiful effect; and when storms of thunder and lightning break over those lonely summits and go reverberating from end to end of the vale, like the tattoo of some infernal drummer, then the town commands a spectacle of theatric grandeur.

XVIII

The name of Abergavenny is rather a large mouthful, and was used to be simplified by the country folk into "Abergenny"; but, bless your heart! you rarely in these times find that short cut prevailing, and, just as the people of Cirencester, have ceased their immemorial "Cicester," so not one of the eleven letters of Abergavenny is now dropped. But if you would hold your own in high society, you must, in speaking of the Marquis, resume the lingual old cast-off clothes of the countryside, and refer to him as Lord "Abergenny." It is a shibboleth that casts the ignorant into social darkness and stamps those who observe it as being of the elect.

The derivation of the name is, of course, from the "aber," or confluence, of the Usk at this point with the Gavenny. To the Romans, in their Latinised version of the native name, it was known as *Gobannium*; but few traces of their

occupation of this site have ever been found, and those almost wholly on, or near, the site of the Castle, one of the most completely ruined mediæval strongholds in Wales. It was here, then, that the Romans had their fortified post, as doubtless, before the advent of those conquerors, the Britons had theirs. After their departure the Romanised British held it, and here, again, another race, the Normans, planted themselves. Hamelin de Baladun, son of one of the Conqueror's knights, built the first Norman castle, and the less dim and formless race of de Braose enlarged and strengthened it. We know a good deal of the de Braoses, but nothing to their credit, for they were a turbulent, an unscrupulous, and a treacherous race, treacherous, unscrupulous, and turbulent above even their fellows, commonly sharing the same traits in a not inconsiderable degree.

But, head and shoulders above even his own family's notoriety for savagery and restless ambition, the William de Braose who flourished at the close of the twelfth century emerges from the surrounding obscurity, a dark and menacing figure of elemental passions and destructiveness. There are no doubts respecting William de Braose: his is not one of the vaguely outlined figures of history, but stands out, clear cut and well defined, against a background of rebellion and murder. His great contemporary apologist, the chronicler Giraldus Cambrensis, would have us believe that William de Braose was the unwilling tool of Henry II., and enlarges upon his piety. He

"always placed the name of the Lord before his sentences, saying, 'Let this be done in the name of the Lord'; 'Let that be done by God's will'; 'If it please God.'" In short, even Giraldus, a Churchman himself, presently allows that he carried this pietistic show to a tiresome excess.

But, like the snake that salivates its victims before swallowing them, de Braose used this method as a means towards an end. He was a twelfth-century amalgam of Herod, Pecksniff, and that smiling villain Count Fosco, and one clearly pictures him going his way with prayers and psalms on his lips and murder in his heart. "There 'e goes, the 'oly 'umbug, 'umming a 'ymn!" said the h-less Lord Westbury of the suave Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, against whom he cherished an aversion; and thus quiring, William de Braose went his vengeful way.

But lest we do even so black a character an injustice, it must be said that the worst incident in his career may perhaps be regarded, not wholly as a primal bent towards the worst form that treachery can assume, but very largely as his wild idea of retribution and revenge. Yet it is well to compare his methods as exemplified at Abergavenny with another deed of treachery recounted at Brecon; and it will then be found that history and tradition have, between them, not been wrong in allotting him his particularly bad eminence.

But, taken alone, there was some shadow of justification for the deed of blood he wrought

within the walls of Abergavenny Castle in 1177. In the fierce doings then common in the marches between England and Wales, it is often difficult, if not even impossible, to discover, in the long stories of assassinations and reprisals in the same *genre*, "who began it"; but here it would seem to be the Welsh themselves. In 1176 the Welsh chieftain Sitsyllt ap Dyfnwall murdered Henry of Hereford, uncle of de Braose—a deed which, in the usual way of regarding things, would seem to render particularly dangerous any further dealings with the de Braose family. Yet, such seems to have been the more than childlike trust of that sanguinary Welshman, he is found at the Christmas of the following year accepting an invitation for himself and his son, together with most of the chieftains of Powysland, to keep that Christian festival within the castle walls of the nephew of the man he had so foully slain. To the reader of these things, looking back through the long perspective of nearly seven hundred and fifty years, for such an one to accept the hospitality of such another, under those circumstances, seems sheer, stark madness; but perhaps uncles were not generally thought to count in those times, when one brother even would commonly slit another's weasand for sake of titles and estates. For all that, a murdered uncle could be made an excellent pretext on occasion, as the guests of William de Braose were, at their cost, to find.

His guests were assembled, and the Christmas festivities were in full swing, when de Braose

sprang a surprise upon the assembled chiefs, informing them that they could not in future be permitted to travel through Wales armed either with swords or bows, and requiring from them, there and then, that they should take oaths to observe this requisition. To require any one in those times to go unarmed was a thing unheard of: as well might a respectable ratepayer of our own period be expected to relinquish his boots, and go barefoot. The suggestion, or request, or command, whichever we like to consider it, was rejected with burning indignation, for such a proposal meant not only leaving men, unarmed, to the mercy of armed ruffians, but was a gross insult to high-placed and noble chieftains, to whom the bearing of arms was something more than for protection, and was indeed a sign of their caste. The proposal was, in fact, cunningly designed to exasperate and to goad into anger the defenceless and unsuspecting guests, who had come to partake of the hospitality of de Braose under an implied safe-conduct, and were accordingly unarmed where they sat. Their natural anger, and their refusal to comply with this demand, gave the fierce de Braose the opportunity he had foreseen. He had, already waiting for his signal, a large number of men-at-arms stationed in the castle, and at a sign from him they rushed in upon the guests and massacred them all. Then de Braose set forth and completed his despicable deed by murdering the wife and infant child of Sitsyllt and seizing his estates.

This link in the long chain of alternate outrage and revenge was followed, seven years later, by the surprise of the castle at the hands of the now grown-up children of those Welsh nobles who had been so credulous as to accept the spider de Braose's invitation to "walk into his parlour." Concealed beneath the wooded slopes which then stretched away down to the Usk, they lay there all one night, and, when the dawn came and the vigilance of the garrison was relaxed, were over the battlements and slaying until they had made themselves masters of the place. Then they sacked and burnt it, and carried away the governor, his wife, and the survivors of the fray into captivity.

William de Braose came at last to the "bad end" which awaits the villains of the story-books, but very frequently misses its mark in real life; but between his great crime and his ending there was a space of thirty-four years, and not wholly years of the failure and ruin which should, in a well-ordered scheme of retribution, at once attend the enterprises of the guilty. No; instead of immediately withering and wilting, he flourished, in the customary manner of the wicked, like the green bay tree, and became a very special friend and favoured ally of King John, who was in many ways peculiarly well fitted to understand and sympathise with such an one as he. Misunderstanding and disagreements, however, sometimes estrange even natures so well attuned as these, and at last, in 1210, de Braose was a rebel in

Wales, in Ireland, in Wales again, and at last is found, beaten and dispirited, fleeing in the guise of a beggar from Shoreham into Normandy, where, at Corbeuil, he died, a broken exile, in 1211. But even so, he was more fortunate than his wife and eldest son, who were imprisoned in Windsor Castle, and there, immured in some dungeon beyond the light of day, with a sheaf of corn and a piece of raw bacon, were slowly starved to death by the merciless king. Is there a hell deep enough and hot enough for King John?

De Braose's third son, Reginald, regained the estates from the King, but with the son of Reginald, hanged by Llewelyn the Great, his line ended.

From them the Castle and Lordship of Abergavenny came to the Cantelupes, the Hastings family, the Herberts, Beauchamps, and the Nevills, who, sometimes spelling their name with a final "e," but latterly without it, have held them since the time of Henry VI.

Rebuilt from time to time, the castle was destroyed by Glyndwr, and was still partly in ruin in the time of Queen Elizabeth, as the poet Churchyard tells us:

> Most goodly towers are bare and naked left,
> That covered were with timber and good lead;
> These towers do stand as straight as doth a shaft,
> The walls thereof might serve for some good steade.
> For sound and thicke and wondrous high, withal,
> They are indeed, and likely not to fall;
> Would God, therefore, the owner of the same
> Did stay them up, for to increase his fame.

But the age of castles was already past, and although many made a brave defence in the Parliamentary war, yet to come when Churchyard wrote, such mediæval defences had in general become obsolete. So Abergavenny Castle never again regained its proud position, but has been left until recently to moulder gradually away in a neglected corner. But a new order of things has lately dawned. A complacent writer of guide-books has told us that the castle "has lately undergone quite a transformation." It has indeed. "A pleasant change," says this curious person, with fatuous satisfaction, "has now come over the scene," and the place where so much grim history was made "is now to be seen tastefully laid out with walks, terraces, seats, flower-beds, and lawns for tennis, dancing, and other amusements: a rustic band-stand, together with a rustic gallery on one of the walls," he add, with a cheerful independence of grammar, "*have* also been erected. . . . Boats and swings are supplied for the amusement of young people. The castle grounds now offer picnic and other parties a charming spot for a day's outing."

All this in contradistinction from a melancholy picture drawn of the place as it was before all these delightful things were installed; when the castle ruins and their site formed a kitchen-garden and a lumber-ground, closed to visitors. But there are those who could better endure the lumber, the cabbages, and the potatoes than the concert-parties, the swings, and the picnics, and

there are things, cheerful and bright in themselves, which, placed in uncongenial surroundings, are more depressing than lumber and a great deal more vulgar than a kitchen-garden.

XIX

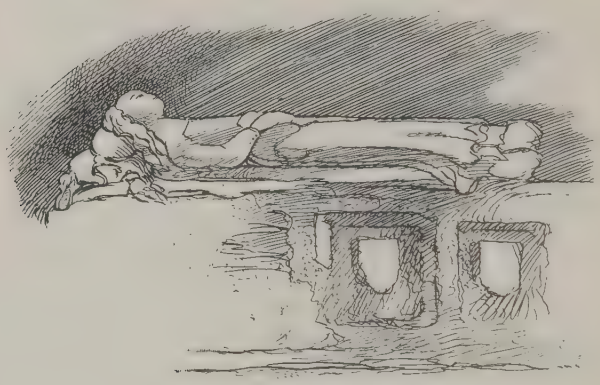
In the ancient priory church at Abergavenny, now the parish church, and a very greatly mutilated and neglected building, many relics of old feudal Abergavenny are to be found, the chancel and chapels being, indeed, a kind of miniature Westminster Abbey for the former owners of the lordship; in their several periods, by right of holding the castle, Barons Bergavenny.

The black de Braoses are represented here, in this stone, marble, and wooden Valhalla, only by Eva de Braose, daughter of William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke, and wife of the last William de Braose, Lord of Bergavenny. She died in 1246. A highly picturesque story is attached to her monument, and is the subject of a passage in the rhymed work of Churchyard on the "Worthiness of Wales":

> Another ladie lyes
> With squirrell in her hand,
> And at her feete, in stone likewise,
> A couching hound doth stand:
> They say her squirrell lept away,
> And toward it she run:
> And as from fall she sought to stay
> The little pretie Bun,

Right downe from top of wall she fell
And took her death thereby.
Thus what I heard, I doe you tell,
And what is seene with eye.

The effigy represents the lady in a plain, close-fitting gown, buttoned to the waist, whence it falls in loose folds to the feet. The right hand lies across the body, and the left formerly held the



EFFIGY OF EVA DE BRAOSE.

squirrel, now broken away. From this hand sweeps a chain across the body, ending in a pocket on the right side of the gown—a very unusual feature in effigies of this period. It must have been from this pocket and this chain that the animal represented escaped, with such a tragic result.

The poor old effigy is now in sorry condition, the features almost entirely obliterated from its face by the misdirected industry of generations of

boys and mischievous persons of a larger growth. At the foot of it is the monument of her daughter, Eva de Cantelupe, Baroness Bergavenny in her own right, and wife of William de Cantelupe, who died 1257. Fate has left to her more easily traceable features. She holds a heart in her hand, and on her body rests a shield of fleur-de-lys.

Nearly all the many monumental effigies have lost a limb or a feature, and look rather pitiful, and the scene is not unlike the result of some dreadful Battle of the Statues, wherein all have suffered. But if we turn to the reclining ancient oak effigy representing George de Cantelupe, who died in 1273, we seem rather to be in an operating-theatre, for there the figure lies—in some lights horribly lifelike—not on a sculptured tomb, but on a board with wooden trestles; and you apprehensively glance over your shoulder for the surgeon. This effigy, strange to say, has suffered much less than its stone companions.

Few people would suspect the great, white-faced, old-fashioned house that stands between the church and the River Gavenny of being the old Priory House, but so it is, and its plain exterior hides a wealth of oak carving and spacious rooms of an older age.

The town of Abergavenny has lost a great deal of its antique appearance, and is a particularly bustling place of busy, up-to-date shops, the High Street, here styled Cross Street, presided over by an incubus in the shape of a Town Hall whose

tower, intended to be Gothic, has certainly imparted a kind of a brooding heaviness to that thoroughfare. It looks as if the Memorial Hall had come down from Farringdon Street, in London, and foaled. The appearance of that building is familiar. If this it is to be Gothic, why, then, the effort has not failed.

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, NOW A MASONIC TEMPLE.

For the rest, when the stranger has seen the old Usk bridge, whose appearance is sadly injured by the gaunt lines of the railway girder-bridge running alongside, and when, for curiosity's sake, he has penetrated the dirty slums which even Abergavenny owns, to glimpse what was once the parish church of St. John, he has seen everything.

The story of this church is curious. The need of it was taken away when the old Priory was disestablished and the church of that ancient Benedictine establishment was granted for the use of the inhabitants. The parish church then came into use as the Grammar School, and so remained, with its old tower incongruously wedded to a villa-like building, until 1898, when the school was removed to new buildings. The poor old place was then converted into a Masonic Temple, and so remains.

The neighbourhood of Abergavenny is plentifully dotted with cottages bearing a great tasselled and corded capital A, the mark of their being the property of the Marquis of Abergavenny, whose marquisate was created in 1876, and who is descended from that famous of all Nevills, Warwick the King-maker. *Ne vile velis* ("Wish nothing base"), is the punning motto of this ancient family.

XX

IN two miles from Abergavenny the road passes the outskirts of Llanwenarth-citra-Usk, and thence, by the "Pantyrhiwcoch," or "Red Hill Hollow" inn, arrives in three and three-quarters miles at the county boundary between Monmouthshire and Brecon. The spot is marked by a stone, and it is well it should be, for, although the stone tells us nothing about the larger issue, we here not only

pass from Monmouthshire into another shire, but from the kingdom of England into the Principality of Wales. By the evidence of our ears, assailed with uncouth and unwonted speech during the latter part of our journey, we might have supposed Wales already entered; by the equally convincing appearance of places with names like those of patent medicines or toilet requisites—Abergwili for the complexion, Llandilo for the hair—we would seem to be in the land of the Cymry; and by the look of the mountains, which are of a Welsh ruggedness, England would long ago seem to have been left behind; but all these signs and portents are as nothing beside the fact that Monmouthshire, politically, is in England. Geographically and socially it is undoubtedly Welsh, for it lies away from England, on the western side of the Severn and the Wye, and Cymraeg, the Welsh tongue, is largely spoken in it, by Welsh people and people of Welsh descent.

But although Monmouthshire, at the time when Wales was incorporated with England, in 1536, under Henry VIII., was then definitely regarded as outside the Principality, and so remains, yet a workmanlike, comprehensive pronouncement has never been made of its position. Thus although politically English, it is still in the Welsh diocese of Llandaff; but again, judicially, it comes within an English assize circuit. It is, however, included in the sphere of operations of the Welsh Intermediate Education Act; but is English again (to the joy of Sunday tipplers) by

being exempted from the operation of the Act for Sunday Closing in Wales.

But here, at any rate, we cross the threshold into territory indisputedly Welsh: we are definitely in Wales, the "Land of Strangers," as that word really means. The Saxons gave it that name, but the Welsh themselves, who call themselves Cymry, style their county Cymru. It would be difficult to beat the monumental impudence that led the Saxons, who came over to Britain and dispossessed the Cymry, to style them "Wealhas," or strangers, and their country Wales, or the Land of Strangers, just as it would be difficult to match the irony of history, which, while obscuring the meaning of those names, has secured their acceptance in ordinary usage by the Welsh themselves, remarkable as a people for the tenacious hold they keep upon their nationality and language.

Heaven forefend I should mock a leek, or think it inferior to the old Red Dragon banner of Wales, but that humble culinary plant, a member of the onion family, and the accepted national badge of Wales and the Welsh, seems a strange national emblem. If Shakespeare be correct, it is, despite its humble garden status, an honourable distinction, for he makes Fluellen date the adoption of it from the Battle of Crecy, where the Welshmen under the Black Prince "did good service in a garden where leeks did grow, wearing leeks in their Monmouth caps; which, your Majesty knows, to this hour is an honourable badge of the service;

and I do believe your Majesty takes no scorn to wear the leek upon St. Tavy's day."

But Welsh tradition gives a much more remote origin, in the story of how, on St. David's Day, A.D. 640, the Welsh, under King Cadwallo fought to victory in a pitched battle on a leek-field.

Elsewhere Shakespeare originates the "eating of the leek" as a synonym for humiliation; where Fluellen makes Antient Pistol, mocker at leeks, eat one, accompanied with blows, by way of sauce. But in "Colin Clout," by Skelton, an almost contemporary writer, we learn that to be "not worth a leek" was the sixteenth-century synonym for the modern "not worth a d——n."

There seems, indeed, Shakespeare's origin of the badge apart, to be cause for belief that the national flower of Wales is really the yellow daffodil, itself a bulbous member of the same botanical family as the leek, and called in Welsh by the same name, "*cenhinen*."

XXI

Now we shall be hard put to it on the way to spell the Welsh place-names correctly, and to resolve their meaning into English. The village of Llangrwyney, to which we now come, is a case in point, in the matter of pronunciation: Llangrunny" is somewhere near the correct method; and as for the name itself, the larger part of it

comes from the River Grwyney, which here flows under the road.

The pleasant vale now conducts swiftly to Crickhowell, whose castle, or, more strictly speaking, the inconsiderable fragments of it, are prominent in a meadow as the town is approached, and form, with the luxuriant woods, a striking picture. The round tower, cracked from the shattered battlements almost to the ground, is, in rough-and-ready fashion, provided with the limb

CRICKHOWELL CASTLE.

of a tree by way of flagstaff, and a board, boldly inscribed "Danger," warns the incautious to stand from under.

Then begins the short street leading into the market-place of the little town of "Crickhoyl," as the stranger presently learns, through the example of the natives, to style it. Howel ap Rhys, Prince of Gwent, and a progenitor of the innumerable families of Rhys, Rees, Price, and Preece, is considered, in a roundabout fashion, to have

founded the town of Crickhowell, by establishing himself, long before any town was ever thought of here, on the summit of the almost inaccessible mountain to the north of the town, in defiance to the lord of Breicheiniog. To the Welsh, his camp on the flat top of that mountain is still "Craig Hywel," or "Howel's Rock"; but the English, adopting for once in a way the usual Welsh descriptive method of naming places, style it, from that flattened crest, "Table Mountain."

This district became part of the lands conquered from the Welsh at the close of the eleventh century by Bernard de Newmarch, of whom we shall have more to say at Brecon. In apportioning out his conquests among his minor knights, he granted the lordship that included the site of Crickhowell to Sir Humphrey de Bourshil, from whom it descended to the Turbervilles, whose line ended here with the Sir Hugh of that name in the time of Edward III. It would be tedious in this place to recount the descent of the manor from Sybil Turberville, who married Sir Grimbald Pauncefote, down through the centuries to the great Herbert family and the Dukes of Beaufort, who still own it; but the otherwise dry and innutritious matter of this domestic history is made more palatable by the exploration of the town itself. Here, in the earliest years of the fourteenth century, the Lady Sybil, heiress of this branch of the Turbervilles, founded the parish church, and here, in that same, although greatly altered, building, rebuilt at one time, reduced in

size at another, and then enlarged again, the effigies of herself and her husband, Sir Grimbald, remain, now by time and ill-treatment little more shapely than the stone whence they were carved, six hundred years ago.

The Lady Sybil founded her church, which she dedicated to that then highly revered saint, Edmund the King and Martyr, on the spot where the town of Crickhowell was then rising, under the shadow of the protecting castle. The castle was built originally on this, the great road into and out of South Wales, leading up to the Pass of Bwlch, especially to fill in what would have been a weak gap in the frontier chain of fortresses that kept the Welsh within bounds. This had ever been the ready route. The Romans came and went by it, and the remains of their roads are still in evidence. Here, then, the Normans planted a defensible gate which, with the advanced post of Tretower, at the very foot of that Pass, was to help in confining the Cymry within their mountains, until the Normans and the English were strong enough to enter and seize those wild lands too.

Thus protected, the town grew rapidly, and the original settlement, Llangattock, now a village on the other side of the Usk bridge, and at first the head of this lordship, decayed. The antiquity of Llangattock is vouched for by its name, which is derived from St. Cattwg, one of the many holy men who laboured among the Cymry of the fifth century, and the comparative modernity of Crick-

howell town is at the same time strikingly marked by the characteristically English dedication the Lady Sybil chose for her church.

This is one of the romances we read from the study of the dry details of manorial descents; and thus from those dusty parchments, from the mutilated effigies of the ancient landowners, and from the initially unpromising facts of church dedications, we may wring something of the story of how a market-town arose where no town was before, and how the native village was stunted in its growth, to remain a village all its days. We may go back to even more remote periods, and find in the great stalactite limestone cavern called by the Welsh "Eglwys Vaen," the "Stone Church" or "Cathedral Cavern," burrowing in the riverside cliffs at Llangattock, the genesis of Crickhowell, carried back to the prehistoric days when savage man took the place of the cave-wolf and the hyæna, and in the more than cathedral-like gloom of the interior sat down on the wet floor to gnaw the bones of the deer he had killed with his arrows.

There are later effigies in Crickhowell church, to Sir John Herbert, of Dan-y-Castell, and his wife, who died in 1666. She wears a sweet smile — sweet by comparison with the grim, hawk-like features of the usual monumental dames.

Very little history is attached to the castle, wrecked by the ubiquitous Glyndwr, and superseded in the course of time by the once imposing castellated mansion of the Herberts, Cwrt Garw,

or "Stag's Court," now in its turn replaced by a more modern house, but with its stout outer walls and entrance still facing the road out of the town. "Porth Mawr," or "Great Gate," the Welsh call it. The old gateway makes a pretty picture on the road, overhung with sweet chestnut and other trees.

PORTH MAWR.

Leaving Crickhowell, we are still in the territories of the Dukes of Beaufort, and pass a roadside cottage displaying a table of tolls exacted by them in Crickhowell market. Close by, a fountain, covered with a roof like that of a lych-gate, is inscribed "Rest and Reflect," and one is accordingly tempted so to do, and to dwell upon the historical continuity of things in our

conservative land. Here, more than eight hundred years ago, the Norman Bernard Newmarch and his lieutenants ruled, and wrung "benevolences" from the Welsh in sheep, cattle, and produce, and still the lord of the manor does very much the same thing, in the shape of market-tolls.

XXII

We are now come to the threshold of a hoary land whose grey and lichened antiquities, dating back to the times of the Romans and the Romanised and cultured British, are still scattered plentifully in the fields, on the hill-sides, or beside the roads. Many have been destroyed, but a not inconsiderable number remain, and they point to this having been a well-populated country. The well-ascertained Roman road, called by antiquaries the Via Julia Maritima, from its construction being assigned to Julius Frontinus, Governor of Britain in A.D. 75, goes from Caerleon, or "Isca Silurum," to Newport, and so round by the coast; another supposedly Roman road, styled, in the same arbitrary way, the Via Julia Montana, runs practically along or beside the course of the present high road we have taken from Monmouth, and continues along it or generally parallel with it until beyond Carmarthen, where it makes, as straight as the natural obstacles of the rugged country allow, for St. Davids, the Roman "Menevia." "Roman," this road is said to be, but

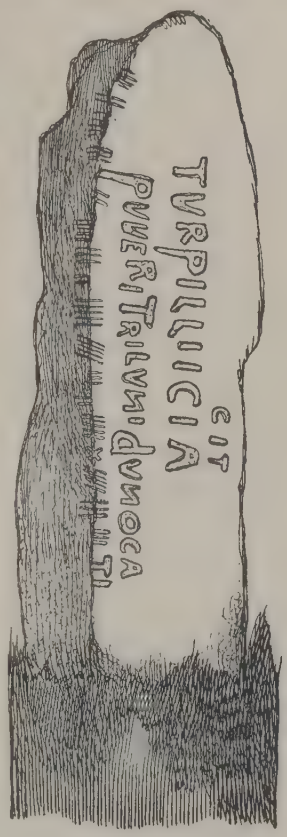
it seems much more probable that it is a survival of a British track already existing when the conquerors came, and that they did not remake and straighten its course here, along this less important inland route of mountains and savage hill-top stations, so thoroughly as they were generally accustomed to do. Hence the more track-like character of its original windings, and its frequent infirmity of purpose, pointing, apparently, to its having been an immemorial pathway of ignorant tribes, innocent of surveying.

A great deal was done to this line of road towards the close of the eighteenth century, when the necessity for travel became felt; in its turn necessitating better roads than the defiles and lanes which had sufficed from Romano-British times, through the Middle Ages, down to that memorable year of 1784, when John Palmer invented the mail-coach. Then the ancient way in those places where it meandered with seeming aimlessness across the mountain-sides, was abandoned for newly engineered stretches; and in other places was widened and regraded along the old course. In that last instance, the Romano-British road is gone for ever; but where the modern turnpike was taken into the valleys, and the old hilly course abandoned, we may trace the footsteps of an early civilisation readily enough, at the cost of climbing steep banks, plunging through miry ways, stumbling over bouldcrous ridges, and sliding down breakneck descents.

More Roman and Romanised-British roads exist than have ever found mention in the Itineraries of Antoninus and his copyists. For more than four hundred years a civilisation existed, and was constantly spreading, in Britain. How, then, should a very network of roads not be required? The barbarism into which the country lapsed on the withdrawal of the legions has obscured our ideas of that ancient time when Britain was still a province of the Empire, and, remembering those dark ages, we are prone to forget the very high standard of culture that then existed here, before the towns and villages of the cultured and enervated Britons, apt in the borrowed graces of their masters, but sapped of their old virility, fell to the sword and torch of the savage hosts from oversea. We may take modern India as a significant parallel, and may read, by the light of ancient history, what would befall the Bengalis if we, the Romans of this era, were to abandon Hindostan to them. That more scholarly and contemplative than warlike race would be overthrown, and the stronger and fierce tribes of the north would soon become masters. Our roads in that great country, our towns, and our public works would probably suffer and decay, just as did those of the Romans and the protected Britons after the departure of the legions in A.D. 410.

In this remote corner of Britain the decay set in later than in many other districts, and the British, or the ruling classes among them, long

continued to use the Latin tongue they had been taught. To that period belong most of the rude, sepulchral, inscribed stones that have been found so numerously in the shires of Brecon, Carmarthen, and Pembroke. Typical of these is the Turpillian stone, well known to antiquaries, sixty years ago in use by a thrifty farmer for bridging a ditch on the farm of Wern y Butler, near Crickhowell, and now standing in Glan Usk park. It is a rough pillar of conglomerate, six feet high, inscribed with Roman characters very irregularly formed, evidently by an unpractised hand, like those of most of these relics. These ill-formed letters and the mixture, on many of the stones, of ungrammatical Latin with Runic ornament and Gaelic characters, seem to point toward a gradual extinction of the Roman traditions and the knowledge of the Latin tongue. History tells us that there was a great deal of missionary enterprise from Ireland into Wales from the fifth to the seventh centuries; and it would seem that with those canonised missionaries



THE TURPILLIAN STONE.

came secular voyagers as well, bringing with them Gaelic customs.

The Turpillian stone, however, has no ornamentation. The lettering reads, "TURPILII IC IACIT. PVVERI TRILVNI DVNOCATI." So-called "Ogham" markings are still visible on the edge of the pillar, and are translated, "Turpil. Trilun. Dunocat." This stone is, in fact, one of the few bilingual Latin and Ogham epitaphs, by which the mystic scorings and notches, long unintelligible, that go towards making up the Oghamic alphabet were at last explained.

These once mystic markings obtain the name by which they are now known from a deity of old Gaelic or Erse mythology. How this singular writing was first introduced has been variously conjectured, but it would seem probable that it originated as a secret priestly writing among the "wise men" of the primitive pagan Irish, and, shortly after the departure of the Romans, was brought from the district of Waterford across the sea to Pembrokeshire, whence it spread to the adjoining territories of South Wales. By that time the knowledge of Latin was decaying in this country, and the people, lapsing into the barbarism whence the Romans had raised them, had forgotten how to express themselves in writing. To them, then, came the people from across the Irish Sea, a people versed in this clumsy alphabet; and thus, in that benighted period of the decay of civilisation, they began again, like infants, to learn how to write. Had it not been for the

exceptionally accomplished of that time, versed in the two methods, who inscribed the stones bearing both Roman and Ogham letterings and scorings, and thus provided us with the key, the child-like and apparently aimless scratches might have continued to attract the attention of antiquaries without their ever arriving at a solution of their purpose.

The unknown originator of Ogham writing, about sixteen hundred years ago, seems to have derived his idea of an alphabet from the well-known method of scoring, by which the untutored savages of all ages and the illiterate of our own time keep count. They kept tally by means of notches cut on the edges of squared sticks, and it seemed a good thing to the first inventor of the Ogham alphabet to represent sounds, as well as numbers, in this way: one notch for this sound, two notches for that, groups of straight notches for others, and for the rest diagonal notches. A clumsy method, and the very antithesis of short-hand. So, apparently, the inventor thought, for his grouped notches never exceed five. He solved the difficulty which then arose of expressing the remainder of the sounds he wished to write down, without committing himself to greater accumulations of strokes above five, by beginning the series over again, on the other side of the stick-edge. Thus, when the alphabet of twenty letters, of which Ogham writing consists, was complete, there were notches to one side of the edge, others to the other side, and another class which cut

right across the edge, and showed on both sides. That is why Ogham epitaphs are generally found on the edges of the standing stones; but occasionally it is found that those who made these scratches have made them on a flat surface, and have represented an edge by a longitudinal score, traversed by the short strokes. Here, on the Turpillian stone, the signs are on the edge, but have been greatly defaced by exposure to the weather.

The saying of "Chalk it up" originated in public-houses, where the tipplers' score for drinks was chalked on some handy surface, and is (or was, for it seems extinct now) a kind of Oghamic way of recording; and it was the equally, if not more, primitive method in use in the Exchequer office which caused the destruction by fire of the Houses of Parliament in 1834, when the Exchequer tallies, carved in this same barbarous manner, on sticks, and stored beneath the buildings, caught fire.

By the right-hand side of the road from Crickhowell, before reaching the entrance to Glan Usk park, a tree-grown, prehistoric tumulus rises prominently from the meadows. It is thought in its time to have served the purpose of an *arx speculatoria*, or wayside post of observation, to the Romans. Centuries later, and until the church of Crickhowell was founded, in 1303, it was crowned by a chapel, probably dedicated to St. Mary, for the farm on which the tumulus stands is that of Llanfair, the Welsh equivalent of St. Mary's Church.

XXIII

Now we come to Glan Nant, or "Brookside," and thence to Pontybrynert, where a little stream, crossed by a bridge, comes down out of Cwm Du to join the Usk. Here we are at the junction of the three converging valleys, which spread out, fan-like, from this point, and thus rendered the place where we stand one of the most highly important strategical posts in the centuries of warfare between English and Welsh. From the Upper Wye, by Hay, Glasbury, and Talgarth, down through the Black Forest, came one valley; the valley of the Rhiangoll, by Llangorse and Cathedine another; and from away to the south the rocky paths between Llandetty and Llangynider. Midway among these was, and is, the famous Pass of Bwlch. "Bwlch" signifies in Welsh, a defile, and the road by which we shall take our way to Brecon through and over it has still distinctly that character, although we must not forget that the broad and well-metalled way of the present time bears no sort of resemblance to the difficult paths of the mediæval age. "No Welshman," ran the old saying—"no Welshman who came through the Pass of Bwlch ever returned." In its original meaning that saying was an allusion to the strongly fortified character of these surroundings. Castles on crags, castles in the marshes, and castles in the meadows might conceivably be sometimes unable to prevent the passing of the

Welsh through this defile and onward towards Crickhowell and Abergavenny; but the castles in the rear, and, in the last resort, those on this chain of posts, would, it was thought, assuredly cut them off in any attempt to retreat. It was a braggart saying, and not literally true, for so late as 1403 Owain Glyndwr broke through and burned and pillaged, returning safely enough; but in its general application the boast was sufficiently within the mark.

In later times the saying took on a new meaning, sarcastically hinting that Welshmen, leaving their own country, found England a richer and more desirable place, and had no wish to bend their way homewards again. It became in that way a sarcasm comparable with Dr. Johnson's famous gibe, that the best prospect for a Scotchman was the road leading into England.

The old importance of this gap through the mountains may be judged from its having been styled by the Welsh simply "Bwlch," without any other qualification or description. It was not merely *a* pass, among many, but pre-eminently The Pass. Grand masses of mountains rise on every side, culminating on the north in Pen Gader Fawr, 2,630 feet high, and neighboured by Penallt Mawr, 2,361 feet. Another grand peak, Pen Carreg Celch, comes nearest on the right hand, and in the vale between it and Pen Miarth, to the left, is the beginning of the Pass.

The early Welsh planted their strongholds on those crowning heights, but the more civilised, or

at least the more skilful, Normans built their castles on lesser altitudes, and not infrequently in the valleys and meadows. They could afford to do so, because with them the science of military engineering was very highly developed, and they lay behind massive walls and towers instead of

TRETOWER.

within earthworks and palisades. A steep and rugged foothold was welcome enough to them, but they generally abandoned the mountain-tops, where the difficulties of provisioning would have proved an insuperable objection.

Here was built the defensible keep of Tretwr, doubtless on the site of an earlier tower, defending

a Welshman's home from his brother Welsh. Hence the Welsh name, now modified slightly into Tretower. Had the Normans been the first to fortify this place, it would probably never have borne a Welsh name. The name means simply the Place of the Tower, and points to that tower's original function of defending a home, rather than of forming one of a chain of castles; but later necessities caused it to be strengthened and rebuilt, and consecrated to uses greater than the first builders ever contemplated. We can readily perceive here, in the rich lands where the rivers flow, that the first owners would be exceptionally alert to defend their own; but events waxed to larger, less personal, and more national issues as time wore on, and thus, although never a considerable castle, in the true military sense, Tretower grew to be a by no means negligible link in a long chain of defence. It stands on a sandy tump in midst of what were once the marshes of the Rhiangoll. Eight miles in advance, up the valley of this same stream, stood the strong castle of Talgarth, and a little nearer rose the very ancient, but small, castle of Dinas, cresting a hill, while almost at the head of the Bwlch, on the way to Llyn Syfeddin, or Llangorse Lake, was the very advanced post Blaen Lyfni Castle. It was still possible for a daring, a secretive, and a swiftly-moving enemy to slip through between Tretower and Llangynidr into the lower valley of the Usk, but there were placed the small castle of Crickhowell and the much greater one of Abergavenny.

TRETOWER.

Much exactness of description is necessary here, for without it the great strategic import of the Bwlch and its defences in the stirring times of old can scarce be comprehended.

The squashy meadows of Tretower, bubbling innumerable springs, are rich in beautiful foliage, from whose midst the ivy-covered, red-sandstone, Early English round tower rises picturesquely, within sight of the road, with a background of immense, mountainous hills. A bold Gothic gate-house leads into the roofless rooms, trampled to appalling muddiness by pigs, and on to the keep itself. There are really two keeps: one, the original square Norman building, still partly in being, and a circular Early English one, built within the shell of the older, the whole a shattered but still noble mass, offering many puzzles to the antiquary. It seems fairly clear, however, that these defensible buildings were deserted in the fifteenth century, and that when there appeared to be a fair chance of the country settling down after the accession of the Welsh-blooded Henry VII., the then owners of Tretower built Tretower Court, adjoining, as a far more comfortable residence than these grim loop-holed walls, eight feet thick, and designed with never a thought for domestic arrangements.

But Tretower had one last experience of warfare, some fifty years before Wales was pacified by the accession of a Tudor to the English throne. It was the time when Owain Glyndwr, appearing suddenly and wholly unexpectedly from North

Wales, where his operations had hitherto been carried on, swiftly pervaded the south, leaving behind him shattered castles, plundered towns, and devastated fields. He came swiftly and half-ruined Tretower, and thence passed down the Usk, to do the same at Crickhowell, and even to take and destroy the great castle of Abergavenny.

Then he was off again. Still plainly visible to the antiquary are the signs of that time: of how the castellan hastily repaired the damage, in case Owain came back, with roughly finished walls and windows rudely blocked up, and it is quite evident from these signs that he was very much afraid. Beautiful arches are filled in with chance handiwork, and finely carved corbels are discovered, walled in with no thought for their decorative excellence, but with a very keen eye to safety. The end, however, had come of strife, and Tretower was left in peace.

XXIV

The ancient road of the Romans and their immediate successors seems to have gone a little to the north of the Pass of Bwlch, but the indications are very slight and do not permit of dogmatic pronouncements, and certainly the existing route is itself of great age. The district is rich in the inscribed stone monuments of those buried ages. Here at Tretower, built into the walls of Tretower Court, and forming a portion of a gate-pillar, are

two, to "Peregrinus" and "Valens." They would appear to have come from the Gaer camp, by which the old road may have run. Opposite that camp the "Catacus stone" is built into the south wall of Llanfihangel Cwm Du church. It was discovered in 1830, near Tretower, and placed here in the hope of preserving it from injury. The Latin inscription is to the effect that "Here lies Catacus, son of Tegernacus." The altogether laudable efforts of a bygone vicar of this church to save the monument from destruction have therefore made it a false witness in its hoary age.

The ascent of the Bwlch is a long mile of a pretty well sustained gradient of about one in fifteen. At the beginning of the twenties of the nineteenth century the steepness was much greater, but at that time a number of improvements were made, including the cut which lowers the crest of the hill and now makes the little hamlet of Bwlch on the summit rather more picturesque than, unaided, it would be. Telford, the celebrated engineer of roads, in his evidence on the subject of the proposed improvements in the Gloucester and Milford Haven line of postal communications, deprecated these already executed works, and held that the money already expended upon them was wasted, because he had surveyed a deviation which, on the east side, would avoid a portion of the hill and ease the ascent of the rest. But his proposals never bore fruit, and Bwlch remains a long and weary pull.

From near the summit a wonderful backward

view is obtained, and it is only when arrived at this point, and looking whence he has come, that the traveller realises the height he has attained. There goes the white ribbon of the road, zig-zagging into the levels and over the hump of an intermediate rise, with the telegraph-poles, like toys, on either hand, and the immemorial hills looking gravely down over all, shut in at the apex of the far distance by the Alpine-like peak of the Sugar-loaf Mountain that keeps watch and ward over the distant Vale of Abergavenny.

Just as the road overpasses the crest and begins to plunge downwards, with the newly unveiled panorama of the solemn Brecon Beacons compelling awestruck admiration, a glimpse is caught of a something glancing away to the right, like a huge mirror laid upon the ground. This is the famous Llyn Syfeddin, or Llangorse Lake, to whose legendary inland waters a road now strikes off. It is three miles from here to the lake, past the one ruined wall and heaps of stones marking where once Blaen Lyfni Castle stood. It was in ruins so far back as the time of Henry VIII., when the much-travelled Leland saw it. Peace then reigned, and castles were wanted no more than missions would be if all sinners were saved.

The lake of Llangorse is from two to three miles in length, from one to one and a half miles broad, and five miles round. Its general depth is from nine to twelve feet, deepening occasionally to thirty feet; and it provides good fishing and wild-fowl shooting. So much for facts; but wild Welsh

THE PASS OF BWLCH.

legends have not failed to tell of many marvels here. Beneath these waters, according to those tales, lies a city of long æons ago, whether British or Roman the seers are not skilled to tell; but sometimes—on those occasions when Christmas falls on Midsummer Day, and when Good Friday happens on a Monday—the startled fishermen, angling for pike and perch, see, far below, the shimmer of white marble palaces and noble streets, the drowned city of a fabled libertine of a bygone civilisation who was overwhelmed, with his people. Some day, when the rightful heir to these submerged marvels appears, all will be changed. His advent will be greeted by the birds with wild outbursts of song, the deep waters will suddenly subside, and the long-vanished city be disclosed again.

But the houses will be very damp.

Another version describes how a youth wooed a lady of the beautiful castle of Llyn Safeddan that once stood where the waters of the lake now spread. But he was poor, and the proud beauty rejected him. "Go and make your fortune," she said, "and then—who knows?—I may look with favour upon you"; and he was indeed a handsome suitor.

The young man turned sadly away, for that was ages before the Limited Liability Acts of 1862 and later years had provided promoters of public companies with speedy methods of growing rich, and he saw in imagination a great deal of what the British workman styles "hard graft"

before him. Like the British workman, he did not relish the prospect, and saw himself, bowed with age, a doddering dodo, before that fortune was accumulated. But as he was making down the Bwlch, he saw a carrier with his van coming up. "Here," he thought, "comes the fortune"; so he murdered the carrier and ransacked his van. It seems strange to us—for modern carriers do not cart so much wealth about—but there was the fortune, as he had supposed, and he returned forthwith to his lady-love and, metaphorically, cast it at her feet.

These artless legends make light of certain physical difficulties, such as that of a fortune being carried off so easily; but perhaps wealth was a comparatively small affair in those days, and at any rate to apply the ordinary laws of nature to folk-lore would be altogether beside the mark.

The fair lady was anxious to know whence came this sudden wealth. Women are so inquisitive. "Now," said the young man, "you will marry me." But she hesitated, not so much because of the way in which the fortune had been obtained, but for fear of divine or other vengeance. They visited together the spot where the carrier's body was buried, and there heard a hollow voice, that proceeded from the ground, ask, "Is there no vengeance for innocent blood?" "No," replied another mysterious voice, "not until the ninth generation." Satisfied with this supernatural testimony, the lady married her bloodstained

admirer, and they lived here in great state for many years—so many that they saw the first of the ninth generation of their descendants born. When that fateful moment came, in midst of the great merry-makings attending the christening, the place and the whole party were suddenly swallowed up by an earthquake, and where their palace had stood the broad lake of Safeddan spread its waters amid the riven mountains.

There is a certain lack of verisimilitude about this legend throughout, but that amazing longevity, until the birth of the ninth generation, is much too steep. It is, in fine, not an artistic legend, but it is a sordid and unpleasant one, quite unworthy the graceful flights of folk-lore at its best.

As for the legend that the birds of the lake will acknowledge the rightful Princes of Wales by singing when they approach, why, that has been proved to demonstration, and Giraldus himself is our authority. It seems, then, that Milo, Earl of Hereford, and Pagan FitzJohn, Norman usurpers of these lands, were riding this way in company with Griffith ap Rhys when they sardonically sought to put the story to the proof. They first vainly tried for themselves, but the wild geese and ducks took no notice. Then they, in unbelieving fashion, suggested to Rhys that as he was the representative of the princely line of Breichiniog, the fowls certainly ought to give him a welcome. Rhys accepted the challenge with serious face, and went down on his knees in prayer, asking that if he were descended from the

natural lords of the soil, the birds should proclaim the fact. Whereupon, to the astonishment of those proud Normans, the geese and ducks and wildfowl generally with one accord stood up in the water, and, flapping their wings and uttering hoarse cries, seemed to make reply. But it is the kind of thing that wildfowl will do at intervals anywhere, whether hereditary rights are in dispute or not, and a cavilling critic might conceivably object that the squawking of wildfowl is not singing.

The legend of Llyn Safeddan being the site of a submerged city curiously compares with the discovery, some few years since, of prehistoric lake-dwellings on the island in midst of the lake.

Resuming the main road, the hill descends rapidly towards Brecon, coming midway of the descent to the church of Llansaintffraed, boldly perched on a bank overlooking the highway. Here opens a magnificently comprehensive view of the dark and threatening Brecon Beacons in the background, with the limpid Usk winding away from them to the very foot of the hill where we stand. Down there the railway from Talgarth and Tal-y-llyn to Merthyr Tydfil takes its way, crossing the Usk by a lattice bridge to Tal-y-Bont station, and looking, like the villages and hamlets in the vale, viewed from above, neat, prim, and toy-like.

XXV

THERE are many Llansaintffraeds, or Saint Fraed's Churches, in Wales, for St. Fraid, or Fraed, was very popular. She was an Irish seventh-century missionary who, like her very numerous brethren missioners, lived a self-sacrificing life among the wild Welsh. They generally died among their converts, and were canonised by those grateful folk, and where those saints had lived and died, there arose the early churches dedicated to them, from the fulness of their disciples' hearts. Often, as here, later followers of them founded other churches in their honour, far away from the saint's own resting-place. St. Fraed is exceptional. She is said to have returned to Ireland, and to have died and been buried at Down; but her memory kept such a sweet savour among the Welsh that no fewer than nineteen churches are dedicated to her.

But there is little to be said of this church. It has been rebuilt, it is generally locked, like most churches in Wales, and—also a not unfrequent thing—the churchyard gate is locked too. This prevents the inquisitive wayfarer from discovering to whom the huge and costly monument in that churchyard, overhanging the road, has been erected, and there is nothing for it but to scale the wall and see. The result is distinctly not worth the trouble, for no saviour of his country, of the Nelson or the Wellington breed,

or indeed of any other heroic stock, lies there: only one "Colonel Gwynne Holford, of Buckland, Breconshire," unknown to fame.

In the old church was the monument of Games Jones, Recorder of Brecon, who died in 1681. It is probably still in existence in the new, and to be seen if only we could win to it.

Games Jones died at the early age of thirty-two, too good, according to the showing of his epitaph, to remain on earth. But here is his panegyric:

Stay, Passenger

And know who lies beneath this stone,
One who was no man's foe, no, not his own;
Who lived as Adam did, before he fell,
But that no rib of his conversed with Hell:
Who arts and manners, towns and men surveyed,
But beyond virtue and himself ne'er strayed:
So far beyond our scanning that we knew
What he was then, no more than what he's now.
The craggy fortress of the notty law,
Like Cæsar, he did conquer as he saw.
Learning and parts which seldom met elsewhere,
E'en with the strictest ties, were married here;
And yet his parts ne'er grew so nicely high
As with them him that gave them to defy.
Nor was his curious learning e'er employed
In making of his own great charter void.
He died too soon, tho' not too young, who in his own could shew
The age of sixteen hundred years ago.
In short, here lies a brother, friend, and son
Of virtue, a community in one.
Of each the best—

Now, passenger, begone!

The passenger, imperatively bid stay and listen to this egregious record of an impossible paragon, and then imperiously dismissed when the author of the fulsome screed came to the end of his inspiration, is sorely tempted to retort, "Be d——d to you!"

At the foot of the hill, beside the road, but once in the middle of it, where it dips into the little hollow of Cwm Geliddion, "The Dell of Slaughter," stands another monument of the antiquity of the way. It is in the form of a cylindrical pillar of grey stone, rudely inscribed with some indecipherable lettering ending with the two words "FILIVS VICTORINI." It is conjectured that this was a Roman, or Romanised Briton, one Victorinus, son of Victorinus; but all speculations are quite futile. The poor old relic has had some narrow escapes, having at least once been taken away and used as a garden roller, and only under pressure of public opinion returned to its place.

The existence of Scethrog, a tiny hamlet of this parish, is vouched for by a solitary wayside post-office at the foot of the hill. The hamlet, whose houses are not within the traveller's ken, seems to have obtained its name from one Brochwell Yscythrog, Prince of Powys, to whom the land descended from his mother, a daughter of Brychan, Prince of Breicheiniog. But the doings of Yscythrog are not the doings of which history is made. He lived, the place was named from him, he died: that is all we can say.

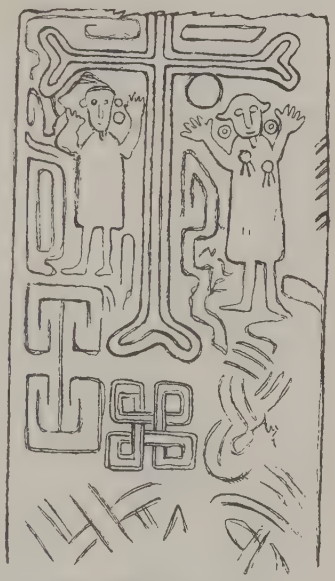
Llanhamlach village lies visible ahead, along the now flat and tame road, always, no matter how intrinsically tame, raised to scenic heights by the frowning twin-peaked Beacons. Under their mighty shadow the little church of Llanhamlach looks a poor little crouching thing, shrinking, as it were, within the sombre masses of its encompassing ancient yews. Llanhamlach derives its name, "Llan Amllêch," "the Church on Many Flat

LLANHAMLACH.

Stones," or slates, from the geological peculiarities of its site, and its hamlet of Llechvaen, or Slate Stone, as we might say, is christened in a similar manner. The geological strata here fully bear out those names.

Llanhamlach village is distinctly microscopic and featureless, and the church has been rebuilt; but standing against the north porch is another of the ancient inscribed stones in which this district

is so rich. It is the stone of Johannes Moridic; bold but rough ninth-century lettering, amid interlaced ornament, informing us, in Latin of faulty character, that he raised it: "Johannes Moridic surexit hunc lapidem." I should suppose "Moridic" to be an attempt to Latinise "Mereddyd," but there are those who claim him as one Muirdach, an Irishman; and we not only know generally how close was the connection between early Ireland and early Wales, but the characters of this inscription partake very largely of Irish forms.

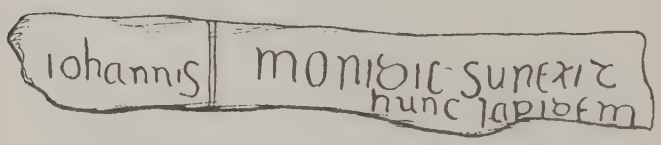


SCULPTURED STONE TO JOHANNES MORIDIC.

The known history of this stone is as interesting as its speculative history. It was found doing duty as the lintel of a window in the Early Norman vicarage of Llanhamlach, when that building, become very dilapidated, was demolished.

Repeated instances of this unsympathetic treatment of ancient inscribed stones serve to show us that later generations have really no especially bad record for vandalism, and they would greatly help an argument that we, with all our faults of

omission and commission, are the first to care for the works of ancient times. It is notorious that the builders of churches and cathedrals, in ages when Gothic architecture was a living art, freely demolished the works of their predecessors, conceiving that their own were better; and here we perceive that the destruction of gravestones and monuments, which nowadays rightly makes us indignant, was the usual process among the Normans when they were in need of building materials and those stones fitted their requirements. Yet they may be accorded our gratitude in cases such as this, for here their practical and



FROM THE STONE TO JOHANNES MORIDIC.

irreverent act has preserved for us, uninjured through long centuries, a stone which almost certainly would have been further injured or destroyed if left exposed. The upper part of the broad, flat face is very curiously incised with a cross surrounded by an extremely rude attempt at Runic interlaced ornament, in whose midst are two grotesque figures, probably intended to represent Moridic and his wife. To the irreverent, this sculpture looks like a representation of Moridic's "day out" in the country with his old woman, for he has a curiously festal attitude, and the odd

marks on his breast are singularly like favours worn at beanfeasts. Other critics might even point out their resemblance to the "broad-arrow" marks worn by convicts. Many have been the theories as to the meaning of this grotesque couple, and in this uncertainty we have the measure of the degree in which the sculptor failed to express his meaning. One antiquary is of opinion that they represent Adam and Eve, and sees in the circles on one side of Eve's head two apples from the tree of knowledge. But if that be correct, what are the larger and more elaborate circles attendant upon Adam? The attitudes he considers not to be those of astonishment, but of prayer. Another theory would have us believe that the figures represent the Virgin Mary and St. John, the Virgin, as the holier of the two, made the larger.

XXVI

The approach to Brecon from this point is of singular beauty, the Beacons coming, at the wayside hamlet of Millbank, well into pictorial composition with the road, and the country between it and those mountains diversified by meadows, trees, and hedgerows gradually leading up from the smiling beauty of the fertile vales to the savage grandeur of the dark mountain-sides. The Brecon Beacons are the highest points in South Wales, Pen-y-Fan, the taller of the twin

peaks, singularly warped to one side, rising to a height of 2,910 feet. Snowdon, the tallest peak of North Wales, spires up to 3,571 feet, but it makes no more striking picture than these big brothers of Brecon, so placed that their bulk is appreciated at the full from many points of view. Their distance of six miles from the road, while giving them their proper perspective and their setting in relation to the surrounding country, does by no means lessen their majesty.

It is by no means difficult to lose oneself on the wild Beacons, home of mists and rains, where the winds blow cold at the setting of the sun, and the explorer not content to keep the usual tracks is presently up to his ankles in unsuspected bogs, or on the verge of precipices. Here, it will be remembered by diligent readers of the newspapers, two boys lost themselves not so long ago, and while one was rescued, the other died of exposure.

Dr. Johnson said very truly, "He that mounts precipices wonders how he came there, and doubts how he shall return. His walk is an adventure, and his departure an escape."

Eloquently and convincingly phrased; and such a happening as that only just recalled emphasises the contention. The way up to the Beacons may therefore be left out of our itinerary, and what many may think the better part—the view of those heights from the vale—enjoyed instead.

The way into Brecon, strangely named "the Watton," lies between the heights of Slwch Tump

THE BRECON BEACONS.

on the right and the tree-shaded course of the Brecon and Abergavenny Canal on the left. Presently the Barracks come in view, and reveal the fact that here are the headquarters of the South Wales Borderers. The remainder of "the Watton" is of the suburban villa character common nearer London, but growing increasingly rarer as we progress.

XXVII

THE town of Brecon is remarkably unlike a Welsh town, and is almost typically English. A pleasant, prosperous-looking, and bustling place, it is quite evident from the age of many of the fine houses lining its streets that this prosperity is no new thing, but a continuation of a long era of importance and well-being.

It cannot boast the highest antiquity, for although the so-called "Via Julia Montana" and the "Sarn Helan" crossed here, the original British settlement and the Roman station of *Bannium* that followed were situated three miles away to the westward, on the hill called the Gaer, and it was not until the eleventh century that the town was removed from that hill-top to this valley. After the departure of the Romans, and until the reign of Rufus, all these districts remained in the hands of the Welsh, under their native princes, and it was not before the coming of the Norman, Bernard Newmarch, that their independ-

ence was challenged. Other Norman filibusters were reducing what is now Glamorganshire and its surroundings, and becoming Lords Marchers of the borderlands, holding commissions from the English crown to steal with the strong arm the fatherland of the Welsh, and to Bernard fell the subjugation of what was then styled Breicheiniog, the ancient principality of the pious, learned, and revered Brychan, who flourished in the fifth century, immediately after the Romans had left, and is still remembered as a saint and a true patriarch, who had an incredible number of children, some two hundred in all, who were all saints by patrimony, and their sons likewise. That is why saints are so plentiful in Wales.

The Prince of Breicheiniog at the coming of Bernard was Bleiddyn ap Maenarch. From him the Norman stripped everything, and thus founded his great lordship of Brecknock. The incautious might consider that, as a Lord Marcher and the founder of his march, he took his name from the lands he had conquered; but although that would be a quite excusable supposition, he really was "Newmarch," or, as a Norman Frenchman he would have styled himself, "de Neufmarché," before he crossed with William the Conqueror from his own native town of Neufmarché (the equivalent of our Newmarket), in Normandy.

He it was who removed the seat of government from the windy Gaer, and, transporting even the stones of the Roman station, established a new town here, at the strategical position where

the Usk and the Honddû meet. He, or an irresistible natural impulse of his people, styled the place Brecknock, or Brecon, a transparent corruption of the old names of that bygone Welsh prince and his territory. Thus, although the Norman came and seized all tangible things, his name is only to be found by the diligent reader of history; and though the Welsh lost everything, the names of their ancient prince and his princedom survive even yet, in those of the town and shire of Brecon. The Welsh, indeed, after their kind, have a geographically descriptive name for the town. They call it, from the meeting-place of the rivers, Aberhonddû.

Bernard Newmarch was a great man. He conquered much, spilt rivers of blood, and founded town and castle here. He surrounded his town with strong walls and defensible towers, and having done so much, very politically married Nêst, grand-daughter of the powerful Welsh Prince Gruffydd ap Llewelyn. In this way he was armed at all points, and was even able to extend his conquests over part of Radnorshire.

Having done so much, and perhaps feeling old age insidiously beginning to creep upon him, he turned, after the manner of all his kind, to make what composition he could with the Church for the welfare of his soul after death. Religion weighed little with those arrogant and unscrupulous men in their prime: consider then to what depths they, and those who were dependent upon them, must have descended had they been atheists.

Newmarch founded the priory of St. John here, and died in the odour of sanctity, and was buried in the chapter-house of Gloucester Cathedral. His son Roger succeeded him, and lived royally on the produce of his lands, his mills, and the "benevolences," or "free gifts," extorted from the Welsh, who had little money, and so yielded to their overlord in tribute of sheep and cattle.

Then the lordship came by marriage to a greater and more powerful man, William de Braose, who, as he was a greater, was also a more fierce, ruler. One of his exploits was the seizure of the grandson of Bleiddyn ap Maenarch, a vassal of his, whom he had invited to a conference here. On the arrival of that unfortunate man, de Braose had him dragged through the streets of his walled town at a horse's tail, and then beheaded, the body being hung up by the heels for three days.

De Braose after awhile fell into disputes with King John, and after being forced to fly his possessions here and take refuge in Ireland, retired, after many intermediate adventures, to France, where he died an exile.

His grandson William alternately aided the Welsh Prince Llewelyn Iorwerth against the English, and the English monarch against the Welsh, and suffered the usual penalties of an inconstant ally; but his tragic end was due to a more domestic incident. He had been captured by Llewelyn when in the field for the English, and thrown into durance, and while thus in

captivity carried on an intrigue with Llewelyn's wife. Llewelyn heard nothing of that until after de Braose had been released on payment of a heavy ransom; but then set about a plan to ensure revenge. He invited that amorous knight to a banquet at Aber, in Carnarvonshire, and there hanged him on a Welsh hill, a good deal higher than Haman ever swung.

These lands then came to the yet greater Bohuns, by the marriage of the daughter and heiress of de Braose with Humphrey de Bohun, sixth Earl of Hereford, lord of many marches in these borders. His tenure was cut short by an irruption of the Welsh; but Brecon was regained by his son and successor, in whose time the town flourished and became the great mart for South Wales. The first important interludes of trade, set between periods of war, had begun, and were fostered by the privileges and immunities granted by this ruler. But a set-back soon occurred. By the marriage of the Earl of Lancaster, afterwards Henry IV., with the heiress of the last of these de Bohuns, the lordships of very many estates became vested in the Crown. Henry V. granted Brecon to the widow of the Earl of Stafford, and that arrogant lady rescinded all the privileges and charters of the town, probably for the reason that the Welsh were growing too numerous and too wealthy, through the freedom already enjoyed. Her son, created Duke of Buckingham, continued and amplified this policy by restricting all and any privileges of the town,

its burgesses and inhabitants, to English, born of English parents. This duke was killed at the battle of Northampton, *ex parte* Henry VI., and was succeeded by his grandson, that unskilful plotter who was charged by Richard III. with the custody of Morton, Bishop of Ely, and who came to an understanding with his prisoner, by which the Bishop was allowed to escape to the Earl of Richmond in France, and the sword was drawn to overthrow Richard. The plot was marred by storms on sea and land, and Buckingham was beheaded for his share in it in the market-place of Salisbury.

His son was no less unfortunate. He possessed what was, in the reign of Henry VIII., an incautious tongue. Presuming upon the royal blood he owned, he talked of his probable succession should the King die childless; and he too lost his head. Brecon then again reverted to the Crown, and in that same reign the now thriving college of Christ, or St. David's, in the suburb of that name, was founded by the King on the ruins of a thirteenth-century Dominican friary. The settled policy of Anglicising Brecon was continued in this foundation, for its purpose was declared to be the teaching of the English language among the inhabitants of Wales, lamentably ignorant of it. It was, of course, policy, rather than personal antipathy for the Welsh tongue, that dictated this attempted suppression of Welsh in the reign of a Tudor sovereign; and it could never have been ignorance on the part

of the Crown or of Parliament which dictated the extraordinary statement in a statute striving to enforce the English language, that the Welsh "have and do daily use a speech, nothing like, ne consonant to, the natural mother-tongue used within this realm," the simple truth being, of course, that Welsh is itself that mother-tongue, and English the now modified Anglo-Saxon of the invaders who drove the British into this little corner of their native isle.

We now see a reason for the particularly English character of the town, so readily noticeable when entering.

XXVIII

The walls of Brecon have been destroyed, and "Bulwark," where you come definitely into the town, is now but a widening of the street, where the church of St. Mary stands, neighboured by the "Wellington" hotel, and fronted by a bronze statue of "the" Duke—the only possible duke to whom that definite article of speech can be applied. St. Mary's Church has been so often restored that its interest is x; and round to the rear of it is the classic Shire Hall, looking like a small brother of the British Museum, and vastly depressing.

The castle, overlooking the Usk, was destroyed by the prudent inhabitants of Brecon during the Civil War of Charles I.'s time. "A plague o'

both your houses," they said, in effect; and so, wrecking those walls that of old had defended the place, averted the miseries of siege that might otherwise have befallen them in a combat between two sides whose quarrels did not concern them. Nowadays the scanty ruins stand partly within the grounds of the "Castle" hotel.

Brecon town is a small place, numbering little more than six thousand inhabitants; but its streets are narrow and crooked, and it is not the easiest place to find your way out of. To the right hand the one long and straight street—"Struet," it is called—goes off towards the priory, its name whimsically resembling an unsuccessful attempt to spell "Street"; which indeed in a manner it is, being on the line of, and taking its name from, the Roman road.

The priory, properly speaking, is gone, and its few remains are in the private grounds of the Priory House, where Charles I., a fugitive from the far-away disastrous field of Naseby, was sheltered in 1645 by Sir Herbert Price. The church, a very large and massive building, largely of Early English date, has a remarkably stern and severely unornamental exterior, thickly set about with yews, and an interior whose ancient arrangements have to some extent survived in the records of the place. Here, for example, the south transept was reserved as the Chapel of the Red Men—*i.e.* the Normans—the Welsh occupying the north. We may suppose that excellent reasons suggested the separation of the races, even here,

in what should have been the abode of peace; and that it was expressly for the purpose of maintaining the peace that they were thus divided. In the nave were the chapels of the courvisors or boot-makers, the tailors, the tuckers or linen-makers, and the weavers.

From the high vantage-ground of the priory church, and from the crest of the Struet, where the Honddû tumbles down past the old woollen mills, a very good idea is obtained of the way Brecon is neighboured by mountains, for the twin peaks of the Beacons spire darkly and mistily over the roofs of the town, and away to the west the lesser, but still considerable, heights lose themselves at last in the distance.

We who have come by road to Brecon through Oxford should not forget that Dr. Hugh Price, founder of Jesus College, was born here. Another native, but one only by chance, was Mrs. Siddons, the actress, who was born in 1755 at what used to be the old "Shoulder of Mutton" inn, and would almost, to those who read only as they run, seem to have been buried here as well, for the house bears the bold announcement, "Siddons Vaults." But closer inspection proves the vaults to be of the less gruesome kind where wine is sold.

Sir David Gam, thought to be the original of Shakespeare's Fluellen, was born at Battle, three miles away, and early distinguished himself by murdering the Lord of Slwch, on the other side of the town. But he bore himself gallantly at the battle of Agincourt, and there saved the life of

Henry V., and lost his own. David Gam was really Dafydd ap Llewelyn—a name not sufficiently distinctive in a land where Llewelyns grew on every briar bush. So, at least, his contemporaries would seem to have considered, and they cast about for a nickname which should properly identify him. This was not at all difficult in his case, for he had a particularly alarming squint that earned him the sobriquet of "Gam," or the crooked, which, sometimes altered to Games, thenceforward became the surname of the family. I do not find the word "gam" in a modern Welsh dictionary, but it is often heard in Shropshire and on the borders to-day, where a lame person is said to have a "gammy leg."

XXIX

The ancient Gothic bridge across the Usk still carries the great highway picturesquely out from the good town of Brecon to its suburb of Llanvaes, now more generally known to this Anglicised place as St. Davids. Telford, in 1825, reporting to the Government upon the condition of the road, condemned the bridge as being too narrow, and had his recommendations been carried out, it would have been replaced by a very strong and broad structure which the mail-coaches could take speedily and safely. But fortunately for the sake of picturesque effect, nothing happened to the bridge, and now that mail and other coaches

no longer travel the country, the roadway is quite sufficiently broad for ordinary purposes.

St. Davids is not an interesting suburb, and its church has been rebuilt. One of the old Brecon coachmen, Edward Jenkins, who died, aged fifty-four, in 1855, lies in the churchyard, with his coaching occupation stated on his epitaph.

BRECON, FROM THE USK.

His occupation went, and then he speedily followed: "Well had he drove: well, now he's done his course."

The church of Llanvaes, the "Church in the Fields," was not wantonly destroyed and rebuilt: it simply fell down, about 1850. Gerald de Barry, better known by his Latinised name of "Giraldus Cambrensis," itinerating here in company with

the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1186, tells us, in his usual credulous way, of a boy who, endeavouring to rob a pigeon's nest built in the then church of Llanvaes, was very severely visited by St. David. "His hand adhered to the stone on which he leaned, through the miraculous vengeance, perhaps, of that saint, in favour of the birds who had taken refuge in his church; and when the boy, attended by his friends and parents, had for three successive days and nights offered up his prayers and supplications before the holy altar of the church, his hand was on the third day liberated by the same divine power which had so miraculously fastened it." Giraldus then proceeds to tell how he saw the boy, then advanced in years, at Newbury, in Berkshire, certifying the truth of this remarkable story to the then Bishop of St. Davids, and concludes with the clinching observation, which to his mind disposed of any doubt, "The stone is preserved in the church to this day among the relics, and the marks of the five fingers appear impressed on the flint as though it were in wax." Sad to relate, a later and unbelieving generation threw this precious relic away.

Here stands the County Gaol, placed, appropriately enough, to the mind of a Londoner, in Newgate Street. Let us do Breconshire the justice of noting two things—firstly, that it is a small gaol; and secondly, that it is closed, and has ceased from gaoling; but even a deserted lock-up radiates melancholy, and the antiquarian mind is almost

startled to find itself unconsciously beginning to regret the days that were.

The lovely valley of the Usk now resumes that wild and deeply wooded character interrupted awhile by the town of Brecon. Llanspyddid Church stands at the beginning of the rising, terraced road that looks down upon the stream far below, almost completely hid from view by the trees that, nourished by the moisture, densely clothe the hillsides, their massed foliage closely reflecting the contours of their foothold.

It is a typically Salvator Rosa landscape, where a painter, following upon the custom of that distinguished master, could not choose but introduce bandits cooking their meal of poached venison in an iron pot suspended from a tripod, while they awaited the coming of the unsuspecting traveller; but if that painter sought to introduce that human interest to-day, and could not make shift to do without models, he would have to make the best play he could with a tramp, for bandits—like the favourite dish to the late-comer at a restaurant—"is hoff." Tramps, too, on this lonely highway are scarce.

But in the old days—those good old days that are so interesting to read about, and were so ill to live in—this rude society was just the kind to be found here. It mattered little who murdered the traveller, or merely went over his pockets, but there were those in these coverts, and under the rocks which properly and dramatically still beetle here and there, who would

slit a throat as readily as a purse; and life and goods were lost as effectually at the hands of a piratical Welsh chieftain as at those of the meaner sort. For the succour of those unfortunate enough to travel this way in those times the holy monks of Malvern Priory founded an hospitium here, at the threshold of this very questionable region: hence the name of the place, which means the Hospice Church. Numerous ancient and funereal yews lead up to the heavy porch, beautifully decorated with carved woodwork, overlooking the road, and other yews line the churchyard; but the "spythy," or hospice, its usefulness overpast in the long ago, has disappeared. To-day, untroubled by thoughts of banditti, you modestly refresh at the "Abercamlais Arms," where the three goats' heads in the heraldic coat of the Williams family, with their motto "Fide et Amore," impend over the road.

A curious epitaph is that to William Williams, who "died pitifully" in 1798, aged 28, of a bite from a mad dog. A superstitious horror seems to have been felt at the end of poor William, and to have followed him after death, for his tombstone stands quite isolated from among the crowd of others.

Across those embosomed trees, away on the hill-tops on the other side of the Usk, goes the Roman road that leads out of Brecon by the modern cemetery, parallel with the railway, to Aberyscir. The Welsh still know it as "Hen Heol," the "Old Road." It conducts, among brushwood and

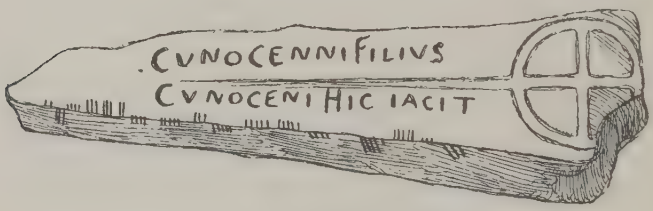
heather and the like impediments to road-faring, to the site of that ancient British town or camp, Gaer Ban, or "High Fort," afterwards used by the Romans under Ostorius Scapula and many another famous leader, as their station of *Bannium*. It must have been a bitter and an unlikeable site, but it had the advantage of being clear of the secretive surrounding woods, whence the foe might rush suddenly upon an unprepared garrison; and this, in these never-settled marches, those strangers from oversea were bound to consider.

Thence another road, the Sarn Helan, ran at a right angle, to the north, for Builth and Chester. There, amid the rabbit-haunted earthworks and foundations of old time, still stands the so-called Maen-y-Morwynion, or "Maiden Stone," bearing the weatherworn effigies of a Roman centurion and his wife: their monument, and probably standing on the spot where they have been lying, these fifteen hundred years.

XXX

The coach-road whence we look across the valley to the site of all those aged things comes presently to Penpont, or, as an Englishman might say, Bridgehead. The pont itself is down below, and leads across the Usk to Trallwng, famed as the place where the celebrated Brito-Roman grave-stone, inscribed "Cvnocenni Filivs Cvnoceni hic jacit," was found, in 1858. The church of

Trallwng was rebuilt in that year, and in the course of the demolition of the old building the workmen discovered this relic, built into the side of one of the windows by the frugal-minded persons who had erected the church, ages before. They cared nothing for history or for Cunocenni, but very much for such a desirable piece of building-stone as this six-foot long piece of hard old red sandstone, and so they placed it here, with the inscription hidden away on the inner face. The discovery aroused the greatest interest among



THE CUNOCENNI STONE.

antiquaries, not only on account of the Latin inscription to Cunocenni, who is thought to be identical with a British chieftain, one Cynog (pronounced "Cunog"), of the post-Roman period, who was slain at a place still called Merthyr—that is to say, "Martyr"—Cynog, but from the mysterious Ogham characters on the edge of the stone. It happened that the equally famous Sagranus stone was found about the same time at St. Dogmaels, also inscribed with Ogham scratches, in addition to the Latin, and thus, by a comparison of the groupings of different lines with the Roman

characters on these bilingual memorials, the Ogham alphabet began to assume a definite shape. Some of the markings on this particular stone were injured, and are conjectural, but in general they are sufficiently distinct. Like nearly all Ogham inscriptions, they run the reverse way, from right to left.

The name of Trallwng is thought to have derived from "Tre-lleng," the "Place of the Legion," and to refer to the mound called Tomen-y-Gaer, where there are traces of a camp, perhaps Roman.

Penpont is no village, but just the name of the very beautiful park of the Williams family which extends some distance along the sloping wooded lands between the road and the Usk. The traveller looks down, as he goes, upon the roof of the mansion, and then upon those of the farm-buildings, the stables, and the old dovecote, and thinks, as he pursues his way, that he has rarely seen fairer domains. A cottage or two stand by the road, and a modern church, built with a round tower and a slated extinguisher spire, like many an ancient Normandy church, is seen, just within the grounds. It gives the spot the alternative name of Capel Bettws, which indicates here a chapel-of-ease.

Nantygwreiddyn, or "Roots of the Brook," consisting of a few cottages and an inn displaying a fierce red dragon sign, comes in sight, and the railway, gradually approaching from the other side of the river, now crosses it and the road,

heralding the busy little mushroom village of Sennybridge, the alternative and more modern name of what the Welsh call Rhyd-y-Briw, where a bridge across the rocky River Senni now replaces the ancient crossing. The Welsh themselves have their own alternative, for they often style it "Pont Senni."

SENNYBRIDGE.

Here was the ancient Forest of Devynock, the "forest primeval," which was a portion of the domains of the lords of Brecknock, and came at last, with the rest of their lands, to the Crown. So late as the time of Queen Elizabeth it remained a forest filled with deer, but that has long been a thing of the past. Devynock village is the

distance of a mile up a by-road to the left, but the railway-station that stands here, in the midst of the modern settlement of Sennybridge, is named after it.

Sennybridge, like the Californian mining-villages described by Bret Harte, is a curious mixture of natural beauty and the uninteresting commonplace. A row of ugly houses and shops faces the railway-station and goods-yard, where the usual hut-offices of the coal-agents stand, like a smudge upon a fair picture; but close at hand is the picturesque, rough-jointed stone bridge over the Senni, with the stream coming tumbling and sliding down over boulders and rocky slides, and old cottages filling in the background. A highly picturesque tower stands by the bridge and touches the scene to the ultimate expression of romance; but alas! the inquiring mind brings its own disasters, and the search for knowledge reveals the fact that this was no robber-lord's watch-tower, nor even a lock-up, but is merely the home of a sewage-tank.

This is, however, an ideal place for picturesque rascals of that kind, and if indeed no records can be found of such, certainly the exactions and customs of the ancient lords of Brecknock upon their tenants of Devynock had a likeness with those of unauthorised plunderers. On the Senni stood the Lord's Mill, to which the tenants were under compulsion to send their corn to be ground, paying heavily for the work done, and in addition finding their produce pretty well tithed; and for

all cattle turned out to graze the same rapacious hands wrung a tributary fine. To see that none escaped these and other impositions, and to protect the forest and the deer in it, the Constable of Devynock resided hard by, in a fortified house called Castell Dhu, or "Black Castle," whose name still survives in that of a farmhouse standing on its site.

This way the old Roman road crossed from the other side of the river, and is identical with the present highway, as far as Trecastle, two and a half miles distant.

XXXI

Trecastle—that is to say, "Castletown"—is but a hamlet in the parish of Llywel, whose church stands a mile along the road; but Trecastle is a considerable settlement, while Llywel Church has no houses near it. There is no church at Trecastle, only "Soar Chapel," standing by a gully where the infant Usk flows, with a tablet weirdly inscribed:

Yr annibynwir
Adeil Adwyd
Uny Flwyddyn 1850

This is not so serious a matter as it looks, for it is only to the effect that this is a Nonconformist chapel, raised in that year.

Nothing is left of the castle, built by Bernard

Newmarch, which gave the place its name; only the great mounds mark where it stood on the hill-top. But those mounds themselves give character to a view of the place, for they are closely covered with dark trees whose dense foliage makes, as it were, a blot against the skyline, more striking because of the whitewashed cottages of the break-neck village street.

TRECASTLE.

Opposite stands the best house in the place—the only house with any architectural pretensions whatever. It was once the seat of the Gwyns, and afterwards the "Camden Arms" inn.

The Roman road remained until soon after 1785 the sole route between Trecastle and Llandovery. Then the road through the valley of Cwm Dwr was made, chiefly at the suggestion and

from the plans of Admiral Lloyd, of Dan yr Allt, and was long known, from that circumstance, as the "Admiral's Road."

It is still possible to follow the precipitous, ancient track up the Trecastle mountain and down the other side, passing the camp of Gaer Pigwn, the old "Heath Cock" public-house, where, about 1750, an inscribed stone, supposed to have been a Roman milestone, was found, and the cottages of Hafod. Up those rugged reaches to Black Cock it was always necessary for the coaches to be dragged by teams of oxen; and down the other side, into Llandovery, by Fron and Cefn Llwydlo, the skidpan had to be put on and the horses led. The road being of such an extravagant steepness, it is not surprising that it was so early abandoned when coaches began to serve travellers, instead of saddle-horses.

The country is here remarkably wild: Trecastle Beacon, across whose shoulders the old road ran, rising close upon 2,600 feet. Llywel church-tower is placed, grey and solemn, by the wayside, at the head of the romantic vale of Cwm Dwr.

Llywel, whose name is pronounced "Luwel," was originally "Llantrisant," or the "Church of the Three Saints," this solitary wayside fane being triply dedicated to Saints David, Padarn, and Teilo. It changed its title more than eight centuries ago, when Rhys ap Tyddyr gave the lordship of this and the surrounding lands to a doughty Irish captain who had aided him greatly

in subduing his own subjects. Idio "Wyllt," or Idio the Wild, he was styled by the Welsh, who have ever disliked the Irish, but hated and feared this skilful, ferocious, and pitiless Irishman, and called this, his headquarters, "Lle Wyllt," the "Place of Wyllt." Hence the "Llywel" of to-

LLYWEL.

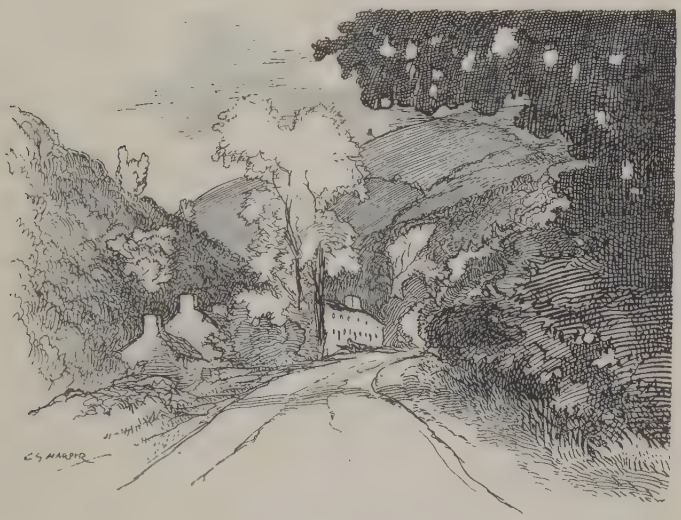
day. He kept with the sword what had been given him in these hills and valleys between Llywel and Llandovery; but, in the politic manner of other aliens greater than himself, he allied himself matrimonially with the Welsh. He married the daughter of Bleddyn ap Maenarch, Prince of Breicheiniog, and thus found an ally whose

influence would keep him in possession at some time when his sword might fail.

It is indeed a valley of exquisite beauty that enfolds the road after leaving Llywel. I cannot do better here than quote a certain Mrs. Morgan, who journeyed to Milford Haven in 1791, and wrote what is in general an extremely uninteresting book about it. But in this passage you have her at her best, and I feel quite unable to compete with her top note. "Here," she says, "the sublime and the beautiful alternately share your attention, and so equally display their charms that you know not which to admire the most. Look up to the immense height of the impending rock, and behold the silver waters pouring down its rugged sides, sometimes bounding from stone to stone, and sometimes tumbling headlong down the smooth way which itself has worn, and at others softly trickling through the hollow grottos; but at all times hastening to refresh the valley beneath. Turn your eyes on the other side, down the steep below, there you see rural beauty in all its native simplicity. White cottages spot the 'thinly peopled vale'; clean and healthy peasants, with their wives and lovely children, tending their flocks, their gardens and pastures, where eternal spring seems to reign. The rivulet keeps them so constantly watered that everything appears as if it sprang up spontaneously.

"In this sweet valley is plenty of wood, and the streams are feathered with alders down to the very edge of the water. The trees that ornament

the dwellings of the cottagers protect them in summer's heat from the rays of the sun, and in winter's cold afford them plenty of firing. They use the clear rivulet for 'their bath, their drink, their looking-glass.' Added to this, before you, as far as the eye can stretch, is a long ridge of mountains, many of them partly cultivated, some



CWM DWR.

barren, and some covered with woods of such a length and thickness as in England we have no idea of.

"In short, this must undoubtedly be one of the most beautiful and finest roads in the kingdom. It was made by a society of gentlemen, to prevent the necessity of going over Trecastle mountain,

one of the highest and most dreary in South Wales."

Much water has flowed down Cwm Dwr since that enthusiastic description was penned, and although it is probably even more beautiful now than it was then, the "clean and healthy peasants," or indeed any kind of peasant or human being, are difficult to discover. In three miles and a half the old row of cottages called "Halfway," and on the dividing line of Breconshire and Carmarthenshire, is approached, but the windows are broken, the place deserted.

The glen is so deep, so narrow, and so shut in by mountains, cliffs, and woods, that the moisture of it is very noticeable, deepening at sunset, even of a summer day, to a piercing cold. More deserted cottages at Tran-y-Glas and Nant-y-Ffin, and a few sheds and a sawmill near Pont-y-Gwydderig, bring the stranger up to a point where the road has risen out of the valley and goes half-way up the cliff-like side of a hill, woodlands rising steeply from it on the left, and a precipitous descent breaking away on the right, down to the valley of the Bran.

Here a wayside obelisk, enclosed within iron railings, shows up whitely against the background of trees, and is startling enough, because unexpected. Wayfarers often think it to be the monument of some wayside murder, but it is merely the memorial of an accident that happened on this spot in 1835 to the Gloucester and Carmarthen mail—an accident that *might* have

been attended with fatal consequences. No one, strange to say, was injured. Let us reflect here for a moment upon the resemblance the roadsides of the land would bear to cemeteries were every minor accident that was not, but might have been a tragedy, commemorated in the like manner.

THE MAIL-COACH PILLAR.

Lengthy and mildly amusing inscriptions on the monument tell us all about it. It will be observed how nicely the social status of the involuntary participators in this overthrow is graded down from "Col. Gwynn, of Glan Brian Park, through David Jones, Esq., of Penybont," to the mere "person named Edwards":

THIS PILLAR IS CALLED MAIL-COACH PILLAR, AND ERECTED AS A CAUTION TO MAIL-COACH DRIVERS TO KEEP FROM INTOXICATION, AND IN MEMORY OF THE GLOUCESTER AND CARMARTHEN MAIL-COACH, WHICH WAS DRIVEN BY EDWARD JENKINS, ON THE 19 DAY OF DECEMBER, 1835, WHO WAS INTOXICATED AT THE TIME, AND DROVE THE MAIL ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THE ROAD, AND GOING AT A FULL SPEED OR GALLOP MET A CART AND PERMITTED THE LEADERS TO TURN SHORT ROUND TO THE RIGHT HAND, AND WENT DOWN OVER THE PRECIPICE, 121 FEET, WHERE AT THE BOTTOM, NEAR THE RIVER, IT CAME AGAINST AN ASH TREE, WHEN THE COACH WAS DASHED INTO SEVERAL PIECES.

COL. GWYNN, OF GLAN BRIAN PARK, DAVID JONES, ESQ., OF PENYBONT, AND A PERSON OF THE NAME OF EDWARDS WERE OUTSIDE, AND DAVID LLOYD HARRIS, ESQ., OF LLANDOVERY, SOLICITOR, AND A LAD OF THE NAME OF KERNICK WERE INSIDE PASSENGERS BY THE MAIL AT THE TIME, AND JOHN COMPTON GUARD.

I HAVE HEARD SAY, WHERE THERE IS A WILL THERE IS A WAY. ONE PERSON CANNOT ASSIST MANY, BUT MANY CAN ASSIST A FEW, AS THIS PILLAR WILL SHOW, WHICH WAS SUGGESTED, DESIGNED, AND ERECTED BY J. BULL, INSPECTOR OF MAIL-COACHES, WITH THE AID OF THIRTEEN POUNDS SIXTEEN SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE RECEIVED BY HIM FROM FORTY-ONE SUBSCRIBERS IN THE YEAR 1841. THE WORK OF THIS PILLAR WAS EXECUTED BY **JOHN JONES,** MARBLE AND STONE MASON, LLANDDAROG, NEAR CARMARTHEN.

From this much ado about very little the road falls away to the crossing of the River Bran at Velindre, which is Welsh for "Town Mill," to enter Llandovery in a mile and a half.

XXXII

"LLANDOVERY," wrote Mrs. Morgan in 1791, "is the meanest and dirtiest town I have yet seen in Wales." Next day she found a meaner and a dirtier, in Llandilo, and thus sets down her impressions: "I thought the town of Llandovery a miserable one, but this of Llandilo is much worse. I never saw any place that had a more deplorable appearance." That dear lady apparently had never enjoyed the peculiar felicity of journeying through the Black Country. Still, the architectural beauties of the Welsh towns are, as a very general rule, a frightful minus quantity, and, as already remarked in these pages, there is a progressive meanness and squalor as you go west. The scenery is beautiful; the towns are but a blot upon it. Llandovery is a quite considerable place, with wide and long streets; but the houses do not often rise above the level of two-storeyed, white-washed—or rather pink-washed—structures, and the general effect is therefore of a fortuitous concourse of villages, rather than of a town. The road comes down into the level it stands upon, over a stone bridge, and the first impression the stranger receives is of the pink blush of all the houses, treated in that colour in obedience to some unwritten local custom that defies solution. But in another hundred yards or so the maiden modesty of that introduction dies away, and a stolid whitewash replaces it.

Llandovery, whose name in its original Welsh, "Llanynddyvroed," means the "Church among the Waters," stands on a flat promontory at the meeting of the little Rivers Bran and Gwydderig, and close by the broader Towy. It is not mentioned in history before 1113, when its castle is stated to have been occupied by Richard de Pons, who three years later successfully held it against Grufydd ap Rhys. Rhys very nearly overpowered the garrison, slaying many of them, and burning the outer ward of the Castle; but in performing those feats his own force suffered so severely that he was obliged to withdraw.

This is but the opening of a very long and intricate series of sieges — a history not particularly interesting in itself, but so thoroughly characteristic of that of most Welsh castles that it may be recounted as a representative specimen.

A period of calm succeeded to this initial tale of storm and stress, this prelude to a long and bloody history, and it is not until forty-two years more have passed that we hear anything further, when, in 1158, it was seized by Rhys ap Grufydd. Then the curtain falls again, to be raised, in another forty-three years, 1201, when the drama recommences with the tale of how Mereddyd ap Rhys was dispossessed of the castle by his brother, another Grufydd ap Rhys, who died the next year. His brother Maelgwyn then reigned in his place, to lose it only three years later, when his nephew, Rhys, son of Grufyd ap Rhys, captured this much-worried stronghold. He returned, however, and,

assisted by Gwenwynwyn, Prince of Powys, recaptured it. Then Rhys in his turn threw Maelgwyn out once more. History was close-packed in those days, for these doings were all comprised between 1201 and 1206. Somewhere about this time Maelgwyn appears to have been gathered to his fathers, and his sons Rhys and

LLANDOVERY CASTLE.

Owain held a precarious tenure, brought to a close in 1208 by their uncle, Rhys Vychan, or "Little Rhys," who, obtaining assistance from the English, besieged them and finally brought about its surrender through starvation. In the end the garrison marched out with their arms and all the honours of war.

These kaleidoscopic changes, together with the peculiarly Welsh ringing of the changes upon Rhys ap Grufydd and Grufydd ap Rhys and their fellows, give a certain air of unreality to the whole thing. When a man, so far as his name goes, merely appears to be his own grandfather, or, at the best of it, his own father turned upside-down, it deprives history of half its flavour, and the reappearance throughout the centuries of identical names, like recurring decimals, makes the historian's brain whirl.

But there is more to come. The dispossessed Owain and Rhys laid their grievances before King John, who demanded the surrender of the castle and its lands to those brothers. Rhys, of course, refused, but after another siege his nephews took the castle again, in 1214. But "Little Rhys" was not yet at the end of his tether. He flung his nephews out again, and reigned supreme until 1226. He might even have ended his days there, only he got to quarrelling with his own son, or his son with him. The quarrel deepened into warfare, he was taken prisoner, and surrendered the castle as the price of his release.

Then came Edward I. to Wales, and, swallowing up all these quarrelsome folks, kept Llandovery Castle for himself. Rhys ap Mereddyd helped him in the subjugation of South Wales, and had been knighted for his services; but when the war with France presently engaged the English king's attention, he revolted and seized this castle, with many others. History tells us how tragically

he ended at York, torn limb from limb, as the reward of his treachery.

Glyndwr captured the place in July, 1403, but from that point the history of Llandovery Castle becomes obscure. Its present ruined condition is thought to have been caused by that great ruinator of castles, Cromwell, since whose time the quietude of Llandovery has been disturbed only by market-days and the annual training-period of the Yeomanry, when it is very martial indeed.

The Welsh have long memories, and the Llandovery people still speak of their famous vicar, Rees Pritchard, with a vividness of allusion that quite obscures the fact of his having been dead more than two hundred years. This loyal clinging to old traditions and memory for honoured names is unfortunately far from common in England, and little understood by the Englishman in Wales, to whom of necessity these surviving tales are as the folklore of a foreign people. The old house in the market-place of Llandovery where Rees Pritchard lived is still pointed out, and his ever-popular work of religious and other poems in the vernacular, the "Canwyll y Cymry," or the "Welshman's Candle" to light him to a better place, still employs the printing-offices of the Principality.

Pritchard, not only Vicar of Llandovery, but a native of the town as well, was born in 1575. Sent to Oxford, he became more notorious as a rollicking young rantipole than for any attention

he gave to study; and when, in after-years, he became vicar, he was long famed in this, his native place, far above any of the townsmen, who were themselves no mean tipplers, as a drunkard. Borrow tells us they were all scandalised at him, and said, "Bad as we may be, we are not so bad as the parson."

He would be generally trundled home from the public-house, where he spent most of his time, in a speechless condition, but would return the next day to renew the bout. It so happened that the innkeeper owned a goat, which, in the free-and-easy manner of those times, came and went as it liked among the topers. Rees one day, when half-way through his drunken course, offered the goat some ale, and the creature, drinking it greedily, became so intoxicated that it fell down on the floor, very much after the practice of Rees himself. The company were horrified at this, and at the clergyman's jesting over it, but he paid no attention to them, and finished his evening in his accustomed way, being taken home, as usual, on his wheelbarrow. The next day he was in the parlour of the inn again, and so was the goat, now quite recovered. He offered the animal his tankard, but the creature turned its head away in disgust, and hurried out of the room. Pritchard was instantly shamed and sobered. "My God!" said he, "is this poor dumb creature wiser than I? Yes, it has been drunk; but having once experienced the wretched consequences of drunkenness, it refuses to be

drunk again. How different its conduct from mine! I, after having experienced a hundred times the filthiness and misery of drunkenness, have still persisted in debasing myself below the condition of a beast."

He broke his pipe, left his tankard untasted—to be doubtless drained by some frugal soul not yet convicted of error—and went home, a changed man. For over thirty years from that time he preached and laboured in his vineyard as never man had done there before, and to his pastoral activities added those of a poet, whose poems the Welsh will not willingly let die. I do not know if George Whitefield, that other sinner saved—but a sinner of microscopic peccadilloes—ever heard of Rees Pritchard; but I think that the greater the change the more powerful the influence for good, and Pritchard the stronger light.

XXXIII

The road at Llandovery reaches its most northerly point, and may almost be said to touch Central Wales. It is in the midst of the exceedingly wild region of the Carmarthenshire Beacons to the south, the Mynydd Bwlch y Groes to the east, and the Forest of Esgob on the north. On the borders of this last-named place, at Ystrad Ffin, seven miles to the north of Llandovery, that amusing Robin Hood of Welsh legend, Twm Shon Catti, or "Tom, son of John and Kate," had his

robber's cave, still pointed out. He was a native of Tregaron, and flourished in the seventeenth century, when it was still possible for the wild deeds of a romantic youth to become idealised in the ardent Welsh imagination. Twm Shon Catti in these legends rises almost to the heights where the mythical heroes of ancient lore loom large; but he was a real person, of good position, and neither the tricksy mountain-sprite he is made in one direction to appear, nor in the other a professional robber and outlaw. The story which tells how he married the daughter of Sir John Price, of Brecon Priory, became Mayor of Brecon, and High Sheriff of Carmarthenshire, is equally without foundation.

One of his exploits, dear to the heart of the people, tells how he went to a Llandovery ironmonger, and asked to see a large porridge-pot. The man brought him three or four to choose from. Tom took one in his hands, looked carefully at it, and said, "This is a good porridge-pot: I think it will suit me." Then he looked again at it and into it, and exclaimed, "This won't do; there's a hole in it. What d'ye mean by trying to sell a thing like this to a simple stranger?" "There's no hole in it," returned the indignant ironmonger. "But there is," rejoined Tom; "I can see it quite plainly. Take and look at it yourself." Then the man took up the pot, and looked in. "I don't see any hole," said he. "There is," reiterated the mischievous wag: "put your head in, and you'll see it." So the unsuspecting

shopkeeper put his head in, and Tom, of course, as the reader has already foreseen, thrust it down upon his shoulders and made off with the other pots, saying, "Now I think you've found that hole in the pot, or how else could you get your head in?"

The story is exactly like those time-honoured practical jokes of pantomime, which, although old as the hills, never fail to bring a laugh.

Romance seems to become immediately extinguished when we find that Twm Shon Catti's name was really Jones. Jones is as honourable a name as any other, but we do not usually associate it with romance. Jones suffers, equally with Smith, in being too widely and plentifully distributed; but for that very reason you could distil more essence of chivalry and great deeds out of the Smiths and the Joneses of history than from any other name. Yet we prefer such names as Marjoribanks and Cholmondeley!

Twm Shon Catti therefore was in sober fact Tom Jones. He was born about 1530, the natural son of the extravagantly named John ap David ap Madog ap Howel Moethen, and of Catherine, natural daughter of Mereddyd ap Ieuan, and although he certainly seems to have had many wild escapades in his youth, was in the comfortable position of a small landower. He was, moreover, a genealogist and herald of considerable repute, and could not merely write his own name —a considerable feat in those times, even with the well-to-do—but wrote poetry. Wealthier and

proud, but less accomplished, Welshmen employed him to trace their genealogies and to trick out their arms, and in addition to that he sang their praises in interminable Welsh pennillion. In this manner he spent many days of his long life, and lived to considerably over ninety years of age. Out of such slight materials are the romantic doings of this Rob Roy of legend concocted.

XXXIV

The "Castle" inn of coaching days still remains at Llandovery, and so does the "Globe"; but the "Lamb" is now changed into a glass and china shop, with a temperance hotel over it.

The ancient course of the Roman road, the "Via Julia Montana," followed that of the present road out of the town until near Llanwrda, where it kept to the northward, continuing, at a distance of from one to two miles, by "New" inn, on the cross-road to Talley Abbey, and thence by Bryn Hafod, altogether avoiding Llandilo town, as Telford in 1824, readopting practically the same road for a short distance in his report on road improvement, proposed to do.

The way out of Llandovery is a road of two sharp turns, with the railway-station and level-crossing midway between. At the second turn the River Towy, rippling and shallow and with broad beaches, is crossed, and then we make straight for

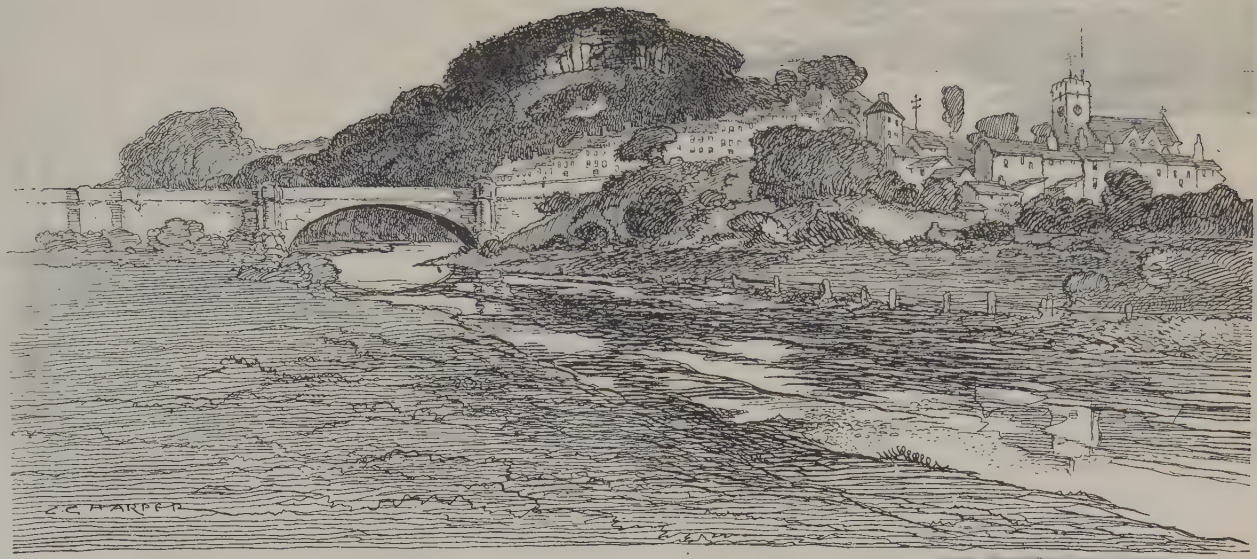
Llanwrda, passing on the way the first few of a new series of milestones.

Llanwrda is probably a corruption of Llan Cawrdaf, or St. Cawrdaf's Church, for the church bears that dedication. Coarse flannels were made here at the mills by the waterside of the Towy and of the stream that here comes tumbling

LLANWRDA.

out of a long valley to join it, but that is now a thing of the past. Near at hand, just where the road passes the site of the old Abermarlais Toll-gate, and within the entrance of that park, is a standing stone, some ten feet in height, over-shadowed by a yew tree. The "Maesgoed' inn of coaching days has disappeared.

The featureless hamlets of Cledvulch (? Cledfwlch, "Pass of the Sword") or Manordilo, and Rhôsmaen lead up hill, and finally bring the beginning of Llandilo in sight. The first glimpse of Llandilo is discouraging, and the beginning of this curious hill-top town does by no means help one to revise the initial impression of that distant revelation. Treated properly to its full title, this is Llandilo Fawr, or Great Llandilo; great, thinks the stranger who enters from this coaly and unprepossessing side, in nothing but its greyness and its ugliness. But Llandilo has two faces: this one of unrelieved plainness; the other, approaching from Golden Grove and Llandilo Bridge Station, of an unexpected and unusual picturesqueness, both of nature and of art. Not until the hill-top is reached and the centre of the town slightly overpassed does the revelation of that other side begin; nor even then is it completed until the steep descent by the magnificent one-arched bridge over the Towy is made and a backward glance cast over the bold skyline formed by the wooded heights and the clustered houses. It is a picture in a thousand, this majestic pose of Llandilo, so royally seated on its bold hill overlooking the Towy; the beautiful curve of that arch leaping the river in one span, the whitewashed houses clinging, limpet-like, to the hillside and tailing away over its crest, the corona of woods, and the tower of St. Teilo's Church away to the right. I do not know what manner of bridge it was that crossed the Towy



LLANDILO.

before 1841, but it could scarce have been so simply and chastely beautiful as this work of the younger Edwards, which enhances the scenery in whose midst it is placed. Scenery is the specialty of Llandilo, for it stands at the gate of the most beautiful and historic sixteen miles in the Vale of Towy, the lovely and storied stretch of road and river between here and Carmarthen town.

As is so often the case in South Wales, the town owes its origin to a saint. St. Teilo in the remote past taught and medicined and converted the Britons here, and then baptised them at a spring where the churchyard now stands. His primitive baptistry was in existence so recently as 1844, when the water-supply of the town was drawn from this source. We are told in a work of that date that it was "supplied scantily from a pure spring in the churchyard," but we doubt that purity, and are inclined to wonder at the immunity of old-time Llandilo from pestilence. A new road, cut at the time when the bridge was rebuilt, divides that churchyard in half, and leads in less breakneck fashion than before down into the vale.

XXXV

"HISTORIC" I have already styled Llandilo and the valley between it and Carmarthen. All Wales, and all England, too, for that matter, are historic; but here is found history intensified, for

in this Vale of Towy, or rather, overlooking it, dwelt the Princes of South Wales, and Carmarthen was their capital town.

Easily first in historic interest, and prominent also for the beauty of its situation, is Dynevor Castle, anciently the residence of those princes, and still the property of their collateral descendant, Lord Dynevor. It stands secluded, well within the hushed glades and picturesquely broken scenery of its park, at the very fringe of Llandilo town.

According to the well-preserved traditions of Carmarthenshire, Dynevor was the palace, the neighbouring castle of Dryslwyn the place of coronation, and Cerrig Cennen Castle the stronghold in the last emergency, of these princes. Dinas Vawr, as it was originally styled, or Great Fort, was at first the creation of Rhodri Mawr, or Roderic the Great, the picturesquely named Prince of Wales who ruled these lands in the middle of the ninth century. We need not stop to inquire for what he was considered great, but may at once pass on to his death in 877, and the division of his territories among his three sons. To Cadell fell Dynevor, as we now style it, and then to his son Hywel Dda, or Howell the Good, who was the author of the code of laws associated with his name. Howel was an exceedingly pious and well-meaning prince, whose ancestry is traced back by the amazing old Welsh genealogists to "Anne, cousin of the most Blessed Virgin Mary." He was one of those amiable persons who desire to hasten on the millennium, and as a step towards

that most desirable consummation, assembled at Ty Gwyn, now identified with Whitland, a conference of wise counsellors to frame the laws by which every one should be made good and the ravening wild beasts be changed into sucking doves. He did not wholly succeed in that worthy ambition, but his name survives among the Welsh as a great lawgiver and a good man. He died in A.D. 950, and here at Dynevor were long preserved the originals of those ordinances. His palace continued to be the residence of his descendants until the coming of the Normans.

The prime difficulty in writing (or reading) of Welsh places and Welsh history is that the kings and princes, the heroes and ruffians, who figured in both are outside the pale of the most encyclopædic knowledge. You have to go to school again, and to delve deeply into the inextricable tangle of ancient Welsh kinglets and their doings, to obtain any sort of just idea what the trouble—and there was *always* trouble—was about. An Englishman does not require to ask who was Cromwell, or whom Queen Elizabeth, and does take some kind of dim interest in their doings; but he knows nothing of, and cares, if possible, even less for, Howel Dda or Rhodri Mawr, or of the innumerable Dafydds, long, short, red, or black, who have earned enviable or other niches in Welsh story by their heroic bravery or their despicable treachery. Generally, by reason of the ancient patriarchal way in which Welshmen were named, the difficulty of distinguishing

between the great-great-grandfather, the grandfather, and the grandson is so supreme that it is only by the fortunate chance of their having been occasionally known by nicknames descriptive of their personal peculiarities they can be singled out. Rhys Goch, or Red Rhys, becomes in that manner something more than a duplication of an ancestor or a descendant, Rhys Vychan, or Little Rhys, is a definite person, and Rhys Grug, or Rhys the Hoarse, is vividly presented to us by that sobriquet as a chieftain with a chronic sore throat.

Thus the Mereddyds, or Merediths, the Grufydds, or Griffiths, the Owains, or Owens, become, without those distinguishing labels, only so many dim shapes, masquerading as one another, and, with almost the sole exceptions of the great Llewelyns and Owain Glyndwr, are a weariness, so that tales of the slaughter they caused, the friends they betrayed, and the battles in which they fell only too often fail to quicken the pulse or move the heart to any greater extent than the contests of marionettes.

In 1142 we find a complicated history beginning, like that of Llandovery Castle, and indeed closely interwoven with the fortunes of that place, which was also among the possessions of these princes. In that year another Cadell, son of Grufydd ap Rhys, seized Dynevor, from whose possession he had been ousted; and eight years later, Cadell by this time having died or been killed, his brothers Rhys and Meredydd, who had been waging a highly successful war of revenge

upon the English, rebuilt it, stronger than it had ever been before. Rhys had proved himself so strong that Henry II. was only too ready to make peace with him, and to cede great tracts of territory in Carmarthenshire. But to be awarded these dominions and to gain possession of them were two vastly different things. He had to fight the occupiers; but at last succeeded in establishing himself, and died paramount lord of his treaty lands.

In 1194 Maelgwyn seized the patrimony of his nephew Rhys ap Grufydd. We have already, at Llandovery, seen some of the doings of Maelgwyn, who seems to have been a typical "wicked uncle." Twelve years later, after many varying fortunes, Maelgwyn died, and then began another series of fierce family contests, quite typical of those time-honoured British internecine quarrels and jealousies which had originally brought in the Romans as allies with one party or another, and had lost Britain; of those later feuds that had brought the Saxons to help, and then of these chieftains who accepted the dangerous services of the Normans, who had already taken large slices of Welsh territory.

By this time, however, another factor had arisen in the situation. Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, "Llewelyn the Great," Lord of Snowdon, who flourished from 1194 to 1246, had realised this weakness, and, subjugating by degrees the smaller princes, had raised himself to be Prince of all Wales. Owain and Rhys, the two brothers who

at this period had, in the not unusual way, been dispossessed by their uncle, Rhys Vychan, called King John to their aid. He sent Lord Foulke to demand the surrender of all these lands and castles, and Rhys Vychan, again in the not unusual way, refused. The allied forces of the two brothers and the English, under Foulke, therefore advanced on Dynevor, and meeting the enemy on the way, utterly defeated him, somewhere in this sweet Vale of Towy. The remainder of this defeated force then flung itself into the strong castle of Dynevor, intending to stand the chances of a siege; but Foulke pressed the investment of the place so swiftly and strongly that the garrison surrendered next day, on terms. Meanwhile Rhys Vychan was busily engaged in burning the town of Llandilo, preparatory to retreating to his almost inaccessible hold of Cerrig Cennen, under the Black Mountains.

Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, as overlord of the Welsh princelets, at this point intervened, and, driving out the English, reinstated Rhys Vychan, who died here in 1234, and lies at St. Davids. Twenty years later his son Mereddyd ap Rhys, a traitor to his overlord, was deprived of his territories by Llewelyn ap Grufydd, the successor of Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, who apportioned them between his brothers and other chieftains of South Wales. His son Rhys then in the old way called in the assistance of his friends the English, who helped him to recover a portion. They came by sea to Carmarthen in 1257, and, marching up

the valley, besieged the oft-besieged Dynevor again; but were met, not only by the troops of the usurping Mereddyd ap Owen and Mereddyd ap Rhys, but also by those of Llewelyn, and defeated, with the loss of two thousand men.

Llewelyn then pushed his advantage, and made himself master of Glamorgan. The "coiling serpent," as the Welsh not very politefully styled the English, was repulsed, and lands long before conquered by the Norman Lords Marchers came again under the dominion of their ancient peoples. It was a time when Welsh hopes rose high, and Llewelyn had almost raised his country to the position of a sovereign State; but a stronger than he, Edward I., who warred successfully with the Scots and the French, was now upon the English throne. Under that sway the tide was not only rolled back, but Wales lost the last of its independence with the death of Llewelyn in 1282.

To Rhys ap Mereddyd, who had been not wholly unfriendly to Edward I., that king granted these estates of his ancestors; but he revolted at what seemed a favourable opportunity and necessitated further military operations in this vale, when the Earl of Cornwall took Dynevor and the neighbouring castles. Then fell Dryslwyn, and in the falling towers of it, undermined by the English, and giving way before the calculated moment, Lord Stafford and other knights met their death.

The turbulent Rhys himself was undone by this storm of his own invoking, and carried on a

hopeless warfare for three years, when he was captured and taken to York, there to be dragged to death at the tails of horses. With that horrible ending the King of England and the Welsh might both have thanked Heaven they were well rid of a rogue to whom alliances were never sacred and treason the very essence of his being.

By this time most of the warlike history of the Vale of Towy was done. The heroic figure of Owain Glyndwr does indeed in the first years of the fifteenth century pervade this, as most other regions of Wales, but the terror of him was a passing thing. No less real and terrible, though, while it lasted. He was at Llandovery Castle in July, 1403, and three days later captured and burnt Carmarthen. But we hear nothing of these castles. Three months later the English had come and lodged garrisons in every available place against the unexpected and sudden forays of that daring leader; but they had no sooner been placed here, in these often isolated posts in a country hostile to them, than their courage sank to a very low ebb, and they frequently stole away. Their fears were well founded, for in 1405 Glyndwr was back again, and for the second time sacked Carmarthen town. He, too, at one time came very near independence; but if the English have no military dash, they certainly are terrible opponents in the long run, and are unmatched at wearing an enemy down. Glyndwr was at last worn down, and ceased to be a danger, and then the land had peace, and has remained untroubled, except for

the less terrible interludes of the Civil War of the seventeenth century.

XXXVI

But an important outlier of these fortresses, and one already alluded to, must not be neglected. Cerrig Cennen Castle, in the wildest, loneliest, most forbidding and inaccessible situation of all these numerous and craggy fortalices, stands in a desolate position four miles away, in a deep vale under the grim Black Mountains. The Welsh "c" is hard, and the name is therefore pronounced "Kerrig Kennen." The vale, Glan Cennen, is that of the tumultuous little Cennen River, which comes boisterously down out of the mountains, to join the Towy just below Llandilo. Suddenly rising to a height of three hundred feet above this green vale in a barren land, the precipitous white limestone bluff on whose summit the castle is built is seen from afar, shining like some white marble palace in the sunshine, set with great effect against the black background of savage heights, or in overcast weather disclosed, wan and ghostlike, amid a leaden atmosphere of mist. It is difficult at a little distance to determine where the rocks end and the castle begins, so alike is the coloration of both, so castle-like the rock and so cliff-like the castle. Its title is thoroughly descriptive. There, down below, amid boulders and thickets, brawls the Cennen, and

here, up above, towers the bluff, another Gibraltar, whose Welsh name, "Cerrig," signifies a rock, and is but another form of the words craig and crag.

It is not an easy matter to come to this isolated stronghold even now, for the way lies—when you are past Ffairfach, a suburb of Llandilo, whose name means "Little Hill"—up along roads that grow ever steeper and wilder, at last crossing the Cennen picturesquely and dangerously at Pont Trap, and rising therefrom to a wind-swept approach, infinitely uncomfortable in wild weather.

It is a deceptive approach, long and circuitous, but when you come to the last reach or bend, there you see the castle in all its majesty, with but one dwelling, a farmhouse, in sight. Like a rugged cliff jutting out to sea at the head of some bold promontory, the castle-crowned rock stands, approachable only by a narrow neck of rising ground, grown with short grass and revealing here and there grey outcrops of limestone. This was the only practicable entrance, itself growing sufficiently steep as the ruined walls of the fortress are approached.

At last, on hands and knees, you are up, with the fissured masonry in front of you and the deep river-valley yawning below. It is a very ruinous ruin to which you have come, and it is a by no means easy task to do more than identify the two entrance towers. Almost all else is formless, and the tall and thick masonry keeps its story very closely to itself. Here is what seems once to

CERRIG CENNEN CASTLE.

have been a large square hall, and here again are remains of other towers, circular and octagonal. Over yonder is a window, and you look though it, not into another room, but unexpectedly, and with nerve-shaking suddenness, away into space, down over the edge of the precipice, from whose depths, if it be a still day, the murmur of the Cennen may be heard arising. But if it be a day of winds, there can be nothing heard save the voice of the gale, booming upon the bastioned rock and in the deserted chambers with the note of a bassoon.

It is a castle of a severely unornamental character, built, it would seem, solely as a last resort, and intended for nothing else than defence and defiance. The amenities of life do not seem to have been considered by those who made it rise, like a continuation of the strata it is founded upon, and they probably lived here only when it was unsafe to live elsewhere. You do not look here for the ladies' bower, and did you look, would not find. Architectural effort seems to have been expended upon strength, with little left over for details designed to please the eye; for but two solitary little fragments of ornament are seen, one a chamfered stone, beside what was once the entrance, carved where the springing of an arch began; the other the remains of a window of Gothic character.

Who were they who built castles such as this? The strength of their strongholds gives accurately the measure of their fear, but of whom? Questions of that kind require long answers, for those who first made a refuge of this rock are divided by

hundreds of years from those others who built the existing castle upon it. Prehistoric man was the first occupant, and prehistoric man was generally afraid of the contemporary tribes who held other such eyries as this. Sometimes they met down below, when hunting the wild beasts, little wilder than themselves, that gave them flesh to eat and skins wherewith to clothe themselves; and the flint axe-heads that have been found in the valley are probably relics of those meetings. The Romans we find everywhere: the country had few secrets for them, and accordingly their coins have been dug up here, proving that they had some kind of outpost in what must have been to their garrisons a most undesirable part of the world. I think the Roman "Tommy Atkins" must often have cursed the Imperialism that brought him, unwillingly, to these ends of the earth.

History has never come to very close acquaintance with Cerrig Cennen, but traditions easily fill the gaps in the story. Urien, a Knight of King Arthur's Round Table, it seems, on the authority of ancient legends, had his home here, and from the same source we learn that the preatomic globule whence the race of Rhys, Princes of South Wales, sprang originated on this spot, somewhere about the time when the world began to creak on its axis. The existing buildings date in part from the first half of the thirteenth century, the time when Rhys Vychan captured the castle from the English, to whom it had been given by his mother, hoping to prevent its falling into his

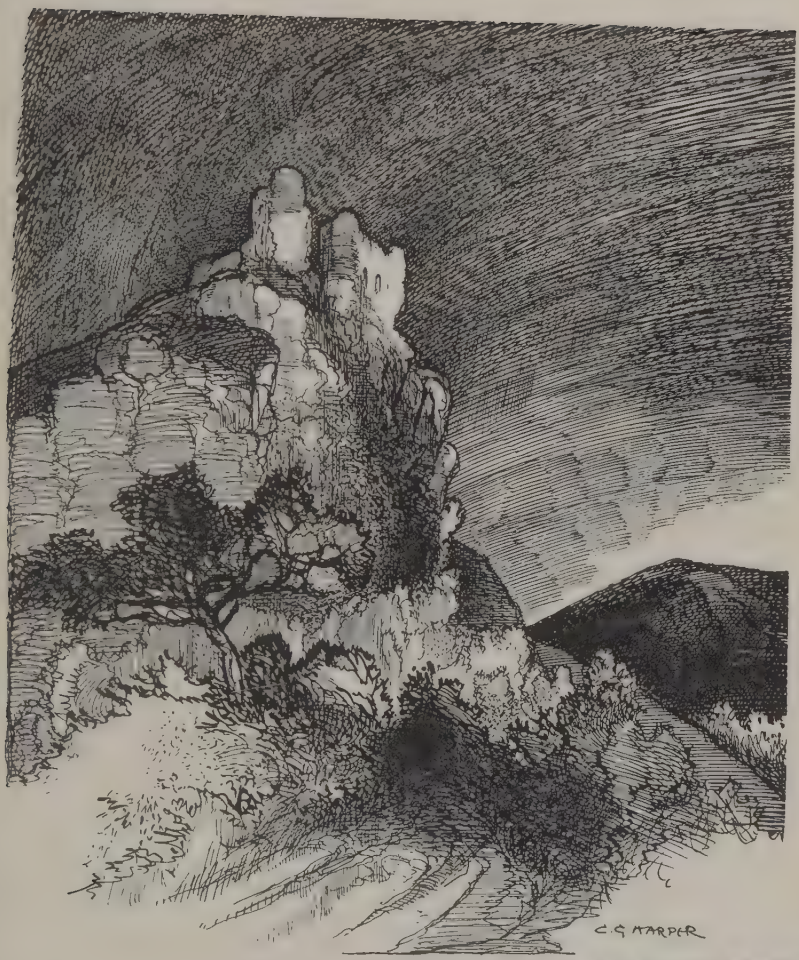
hands. She was disappointed in her hopes, it is evident; but the story is very characteristic of the quarrelsome Welsh. After disclosing that interesting tableau, or tabloid, as a Mrs. Malaprop might say, the curtain falls upon the history of Cerrig Cennen.

THE ROCK GALLERY, CERRIG CENNEN.

If its history be indeed meagre, it is in itself and in its situation full of interest. We not infrequently discount enthusiastic descriptions of castles, but here strength and solitude make a magnificent combination. Where else can the counterpart of the singular and romantic rock-hewn passage leading down to the well from these

castellated walls be found? A narrow doorway conducts to a passage not more than three feet in width, with a range of windows cut in the face of the rock, roughly leading to a large natural cavern, black as night, where the water percolates through the roof and a spring trickles scantily through the floor. Mediæval times seem very real to those who explore this rude gallery and that black hole, and as the winds howl at those rock-hewn windows, and the ivy sadly rustles on the edge of the alarming void, the story of the old days returns with convincing force.

The base of Cerrig Cennen is no whit less imposing and awe-inspiring than its crest, but it is more difficult to arrive at, being surrounded by steep and narrow lanes of a truly mediæval quality, enclosed between high hedges, and strewn with loose stones—a misery to cycle and a penance to walk. And yet, let us not desire for these surroundings the trimly gravelled paths with hairpin iron fences that in these times have been made to rob many stern old fortresses of much of the grandeur that comes to them from the original ruggedness of their setting. But in this instance we need have no fear of that calamity, for the place is far removed from the well-meant but injudicious trimming and frilling and flower-bedding of town councils, and if the evidence of these truly dreadful stones goes for anything, those who own the castle and these lanes much prefer to keep the spot unapproachable. Here is an excruciating dilemma: would you rather risk a broken ankle



CERRIG CENNEN, CASTLE.

and keep the "atmosphere" of this grim hold, or go softly and endure the kid-glove treatment meted out to the rude ribs of too many a poor old ruin, made by such means to look foolish in its old age? For my part, I would abate not a single stone, nor any of the muddy ruts.

Down here by the river side, and underneath that frowning wall of limestone rock, those toppling, ivy-clad pinnacles, the view is one of grandeur. Trees and bushes sprout here and there in hazardous mid-air footholds, and innumerable jackdaws make a veritable House of Commons of the dizzy crannies three hundred feet overhead. No enemy could ever have scaled the face of such a cliff, and it is doubtful if such a feat would be possible nowadays, now that the attempt would not be made in face of a hostile garrison, ready to stop it by toppling over the escaladers with molten lead, stones, or the contents of the *garderobes*.

One leaves Cerrig Cennen with the warm and comfortable feeling of having explored to extraordinarily good purpose, and having made the acquaintance of one of the few sights that not only do not disappoint expectations, but exceed them.

On the banks of the Cennen, where none are skilled to find it, is the cave within the cave of Ogof Dinas, where, according to the ancient legend of the countryside, the sleeping warriors of Wales lie until the hour shall strike which recalls them to life and action. But one man has ever stumbled upon their darksome lair, and that

was a cattle-drover of the vague period of "once upon a time," who, passing by Ogof Dinas, cut a stick from the tangled woodlands of the place, and, belabouring his cattle with it all the way to London, arrived at last at Smithfield, where he met a stranger who told him exactly where the stick had been cut, and promised to show him wonders at that spot. When the cattle had been disposed of, they returned together to Wales, and the stranger, borrowing a spade for himself and another for the drover, led the way from Llandilo to the cave. There they dug and delved until they fell through a hole into a chamber lit by some unearthly glimmer, by whose phosphorescent glow the sleeping form of a huge armed man was seen, still grasping in his strangely red hand a huge sword, with other slumbering warriors around him. The guide, who seemed to know his way about the place with curious familiarity, informed the drover that this was Owain Lawgoch, "Owain of the Red Hand," sleeping here with his fellows for centuries, until the time should come for them to rise and deliver Wales from her conquerors. The sword of Red-Handed Owain was a weapon that had never known defeat. But what especially attracted the greedy drover's attention was the heap of ancient gold coins, glittering dully, close by. What was their purpose? To bribe the enemies whom that sword should not be able to subdue? At any rate, he determined to have some, but said nothing to the stranger, who led him away and then left him,

Next day he returned and took just one; then, courage growing, proposed to make another journey the following day and make off with some more. But on this occasion he could not find the cave, and, although he made several attempts, never again won to the magic spot. Never was such a disappointed drover as this, who might, with a little more courage, have pocketed a fortune. I think I hear him swearing now.

XXXVII

In the opposite direction from Cerrig Cennen, away to the north of Llandilo, close upon eight miles up the valley of a little affluent of the Towy which runs from a little company of small lakes, are the ruins of Talley Abbey. Although twice the distance from Llandilo of Cerrig Cennen, the expedition to Talley is an easy matter, the road running straight in direction, and with helpful switchback rises and descents, along a sweetly wooded vale.

Talley Abbey, situated in a broadening of this vale called by the monks "Valle Taliaris," was founded for a Premonstratensian brotherhood by Rhys ap Grufydd somewhere about 1190, and continued here until the dissolution of all religious houses in the reign of Henry VIII. Its name derived from the Welsh, "Tal-y-llychau," or "Head of the Lakes," the reference being to

the lakes and springs which form the head-waters of the little stream, and still spread an expanse of some fifty acres in the fertile meadows shut in and sheltered by the towering hills, where the abbey stood.

For three hundred and fifty years the great tower of Talley Abbey rose from beside these quiet waters, its walls mirrored in their fishful depths, just as its ruins are yet reflected there; and the wealth of the community was increased by the continued benefactions of the neighbouring princes and landowners of South Wales, and by their own farming operations in these fertile lands, where, with that practical eye of the old-time religious, they had first decided to fix the site of their church.

Little history was ever made at Talley, and its uneventful story seems to indicate a happy and undisturbed life until that cataclysm in which, with hundreds of other abbeys, greater and smaller, it was swept out of existence.

The ruins are unimportant in themselves, consisting as they do of little more than half of the tower, and portions of the great arches of the crossing of nave, choir, and transepts; but they make, by reason of their setting against a background of wooded hills and the foreground of a lake thickly overgrown with water-lilies, a very beautiful scene. The tiny village of Talley is grouped around the ruins, and quite close to them is the little modern church, fitly replacing in its Early Gothic character a building, erected in 1773,

in what is described as "a Grecian style." We who know the Grecian style, as commonly understood at that period, conjure up a mental picture of a building for whose disappearance we can hardly be too thankful. It was a period which regarded Gothic architecture as barbarous, and used the expression "Gothic" as a term of con-

TALLEY ABBEY.

tempt; but they who built in that Grecian style were Goths in the worst sense of the word, for they not only affronted the spirit of the abbey, but took from it the stones wherewith to build their pagan temple. Had it not been for them, we should to-day have a finer group of ruins than the meagre walls we now see.

XXXVIII

From Llandilo the road to Carmarthen has alternative routes, going on either side of the Towy. The most picturesque is that on the south side of the river; but the so-called "upper road," on the north, may be given in the first instance, because it is in part of its course the original "Via Julia Montana." Whether it be a truly Roman road, or one only slightly adapted by them, certainly those who first set it out were not going out of their way to cross the Towy twice, as the "lower road" does, to reach Carmarthen; but kept, for some distance away from Llandilo, on the high ground nearly two miles to the north, only dropping down to the levels near the north bank of the Towy at "Pantglas" inn. It falls into the modern road from Llandilo at Broadoak.

The modern highway itself begins by a steep and narrow rise out of the town, passing the entrance to the wooded and romantic park where the ruined towers of Dynevor Castle stand, and then, descending and passing the hamlet of Broadoak, comes to a wayside inn, the "Pantglas," or, done into English, "Green Valley Arms," over whose door is displayed the elaborate heraldic achievement of the Joneses of Pantglas, with the motto, "Da ei fydd," or "Good his faith."

Then comes Cothybridge, where the River Cothy comes down out of the hills, and has given

an excuse for the founders of the adjoining chapel to christen their ugly creation by the name of Siloam, whose pool they in imagination saw reproduced here. Cothybridge is the exact English translation of the original Welsh place-name, Pont-ar-Cothi, and here is an eminently substantial but plain, matter-of-fact bridge which has replaced the older and picturesque Welsh pont, just as the old Welsh name has been superseded.

At Nantgareddig, whose name would appear to mean "Loving Brook," the road is overhung with rugged cliffs, draped with ivy, undergrowth, and trees; and a branch road goes off among the woods to where, in a greenwood tangle secluded enough to delight the heart of a Robin Hood, Merlin's grove and cave are to be discovered:

> In a deep delve far from the view of day,
> That of no living wight he mote be found
> When so he counsell'd with his sprights around.
> And if thou ever happen that same way
> To travel, go and see that dreadful place.
> It is a hideous, hollow, cave-like bay,
> Under a rock that has a little space
> From the swift Tyvi, tumbling down apace
> Amongst the woody hills of Dinevowr.
> But dare not thou, in any case
> To enter into that same baleful bower,
> For fear the cruel fiends should thee unware devour.

Spenser, who writes thus in the "Faëry Queene," places the magician's residence within the woods of Dynevor; but we may shrewdly suspect he

exercised that poetic licence in order to work in the thrilling rhyme "devour" and "Dinevowr," almost as heroic a feat as that of Mr. W. S. Gilbert, who makes his accomplished Major-General, in the *Pirates of Penzance*, narrate how he has

> heard the battle's din afore,
> And can whistle all the airs from that confounded nonsense,
> *Pinafore.*

But we have kept Merlin waiting—a dangerous thing to do with a magician of such a high voltage.

There can be little doubt but that Merlin was a real person; but beyond that all is vague. His identity, and whether there were two Merlins, are questions that can never now be resolved from the heaped strata of folk-lore, quasi-historical romance, and early and later poetry, that bury the original facts deep beyond any possibility of recovery. According to the legends, there were two Merlins, this Brito-Welsh Merlin Ambrosius, or Myrddin Emrys, and a Caledonian Merlin of Strathclyde, who appears, if the contention of that clan be true, to have been really a Maclean; but the whole question is inextricably complicated by the existence of other legendary magicians, with very similar names, in the folk-lore of many other countries.

Merlin Ambrosius was born in the fifth century, and, according to the fearful mysticism of later years, was the son of a Welsh princess (or a nun) and a demon. With such a parentage everything

was possible; like Voltaire's "ce coquin d'Habbakuk," Merlin was "capable de tout."

We first hear of Merlin in the pages of Nennius, the monk of Bangor, who gathered up the Welsh legends of his time, and from them wrote his "History of the Britons." From Nennius to Geoffrey of Monmouth, who wrote a "Vita Merlini," and on to many other exquisitely untruthful "historians," who never scrupled to add embellishments from their own imaginations, the wondrous story expanded. Marvel succeeded marvel. Spenser, as we have seen, helped, and onwards, to Sir Thomas Malory and Tennyson, Merlin and the Arthurian legend grew majestically.

It seems probable that the original of these legends, whatever his real name and position, was a person who, equipped with a knowledge of natural forces far beyond anything ever heard of or suspected by the Britons, was enabled in that manner to impress upon them a vivid conviction of his supernatural powers. Captain Cook, exploring the South Sea Islands in the eighteenth century, was a god to the savages he found there, and the muskets of his party were to them as the thunderbolts of Jove.

Merlin first appears in those tales of mystery and dread as an infant brought to Vortigern, who ruled a part of Britain after the withdrawal of the Romans and proposed to build a palace on Snowdon. He had been told by his "wise men" that the palace could never be reared unless its foundations

were sprinkled with the blood of a child who had never had a father. The infant Merlin, say the legends, forgetting for awhile that he had a father —and such an one!—was accordingly brought to Vortigern for that purpose, but so precociously advised that prince how to set about his building that he escaped being sacrificed. The next thing was to baptise him, and so rescue him from paternal influences. This done, he set out upon a varied career. In the fulness of time Vortigern died, and Merlin transferred his services to Aurelius Ambrosianus, who died in his turn and was buried on Salisbury Plain. Antiquaries have ever been baffled in their attempts to account for Stonehenge, and for the huge stones, of no local geological formation, of which it is formed; but they have only to read the life of Merlin to have their difficulties solved. It was a small matter for him to know that those stones were in Ireland, to travel across the sea and fight the Irish for them, and then to bring them across and set them up as a monument to Aurelius. There they undeniably remain to this day, and if possession be nine points of the law, certainly to the confiding mind occupation ought to prove the truth of nine-tenths of a fairy-tale.

Pendragon reigned in Wales by this time, and Merlin found a bride for him, who became the mother of King Arthur. Geoffrey of Monmouth is responsible for that fragment of genealogy.

Among Merlin's many activities and miraculous attainments was the gift of prophecy; but his

foretelling of the future was generally of the backhanded kind exemplified in the saying attributed to him, that a Prince of Wales would wear his crown in London when money became round. Money, we are told, was made round in 1278, and in 1282 the long and desperate struggles of Llewelyn to maintain the independence of Wales were brought to an end by his being slain. His head was sent to Rhuddlan, and thence to London, where, in order satirically to fulfil the well-known prophecy, it was paraded through the streets, crowned with a wreath of ivy, at the end of a pole. That, therefore, was fulfilment to the letter and not to the spirit, and it looks as if Merlin, if a prophet at all, was of the malevolent and cynical sort, prophesying, with his tongue in his cheek, disasters in the specious guise of national triumphs. Of course there is an alternative, and a special pleader might contend that a Prince of Wales did wear his crown in London when Edward II. succeeded his father. But he was not Prince of Wales in the strict acceptance of that prophecy. The native princes were understood, and not the scions of an alien race. Later history brought an admixture of Welsh blood into the reigning families of England, by which, in a manner of speaking, the titular Princes of Wales have often fulfilled the prophet's words; but money had then been made round an unconscionable time, and thus, strictly, and without any juggling with facts, Merlin is out of court.

After many other amazing performances,

Merlin ended in a very stupid way. He went to sea with nine bards in a vessel of glass, and (very naturally) was never heard of again. That, however, is but one version; for, as the Irishman put it, he had as many lives as Plutarch, and indeed, according to the best authorities, is not dead yet, but is still sleeping that enchanted slumber into which he was thrown by Vivien. Ah! if only that bewitched stone under whose weight he lies could be found!

In this version Merlin is said to have left his cave, bidding the Lady of the Lake keep watch over his gnomes and sprites until his return. When he set forth, those supernatural artificers were busily at work on the task of making a brazen wall to encircle Carmarthen, and they have not completed it yet. The listening stranger may, if he have exceptionally good hearing, and comes here at the proper time—say when Sunday comes in the middle of the week—hear Merlin's goblins in their underground hold plying their anvils with hammer-strokes, seething their brazen cauldrons, and clanking their iron chains.

Abergwili, whose name comes from the meeting-place of the Guilly and the Towy, is a village with some traces of architectural beauty. It probably owes the good character of its cottages to the fact that the place was the site of an important collegiate church, and has long been the residence of the Bishops of St. Davids, whose palace, on the beautiful banks of the Towy, was completely destroyed by fire in 1903. An amusing instance

of the extreme reverence in which bishops were held, not so long ago, may be cited from the evidence given before the Commission of Inquiry into the state of South Wales, held in 1843, when it appeared that a toll-house generally cost about £60 to build, and that one had actually been built for so little as £15. The toll-house at Abergwili, however, had cost upwards of £200. Pressed for the reason of this, the witness said it was to please the Bishop: "The trustees wanted something ornamental, as it led to the Bishop's Palace."

From this point the road grows gradually tame, and enters Carmarthen by Priory Street.

XXXIX

We come now to the most interesting and beautiful of the two routes from Llandilo to Carmarthen—that on the south side of the Towy, whence, from across the broad, but shallow, rippling river and those wide meadows that form the most fertile land in South Wales, you see the hill-top ruins of great Dynevor at their best. It is a vale of castles, and well might it be, for these fair lands were well worth fighting for, and equally well worth defending; and the ruined keeps and towers that crown the hilltops prove the fierceness of those fights, to take or to hold, that were done with, hundreds of years ago.

The round tower of Dynevor has a part in this

landscape very like those towered castles set with such conviction of line upon the craggy steeps of Durer's engravings, and the masculine sturdiness of the great oaks that grow with such fine effect upon the hillsides lends something of the same mediæval quality to the scene. It is thus with something of surprise that you find Dynevor to

DYNEVOR.

have been inhabited until 1760, and then only deserted because of a fire that almost completely destroyed it. How much longer its owners would have been content to live within the yard-thick walls, and amid the obsolete surroundings appropriate enough to mail-clad knights, but scarce fitted for more luxurious times, is therefore

unknown, but the eighteenth-century descendants of those tough fighting-men seem to have gladly embraced the opportunity offered them of sheltering elsewhere. Then Newton House, the present seat of the Barons Dynevor, was built, where their forbears dared not build before, in the vale, and the blackened ancestral towers above were left to the crows, the jackdaws, and the owls.

The view point from this road, whence we see Dynevor so exquisitely displayed, is from where the road leads past Golden Grove, a wooded park in whose recesses the mansion of the same name is hid.

Golden Grove, the seat of the Earl of Cawdor, who, as a Scottish peer and a Campbell, is not placed amid a particularly sympathetic race, is a modern black granite mansion replacing the old house of the Vaughans, Earls of Carbery, one of whom gave that Royalist divine, Jeremy Taylor, a refuge and a post as domestic chaplain in the years between 1645 and 1655. In 1648 Cromwell set out for South Wales to crush a rising of the Royalists, and passing through Llandilo, came to Golden Grove, whence, at his approach, Lord Carbery had flown, leaving Lady Carbery to do her best with that unwelcome visitor. He had come with thoughts of sequestrating the property of my lord, but my lady received him with such courtesy and dined him so well that he continued down along his line of march without doing anything of the kind. The bear is not usually any the less ready to

claw you because you have been feeding him with buns, but here was an exception.

Taylor wrote several of his works here, including the "Holy Living and Holy Dying," which brought him the greater part of the fame he enjoys. The tone of his writing is singularly fresh, and has an air of modernity strange in religious addresses and homilies composed more than two hundred and fifty years ago.

Beyond the last lodge-gates of Golden Grove is the left-hand turning where may be found the little church of Llanvihangel Aberbythych, restored by that Universal Provider of restorations, Sir Gilbert Scott, and therefore plentifully lacking in interest. Now the road draws near the Towy, overlooking river and vale from little rises, giving the most beautiful comprehensive views down the course of the stream, to where on this side rise the lofty wooded hills crowned by Nelson's Monument, and on the other the bold and sudden hill coroneted with the moulder-ing walls of Dryslwyn Castle. It stands there, like some lighthouse cliff, projecting grandly into an inland sea, and though the levels from which it rises are the pasture-lands of sheep and cattle, where the grass is succulent and the hedge-row elms grow great in the nutritious soil, the simile is curiously aided by the broad, pebbly beaches the Towy has made along its passage to Carmarthen. It is not, in summer, a formid-able river, for its breadth is but an imposing deceit, and it is extremely shallow; but those

THE VALE OF TOWY.

wide selvedges of well-washed pebbles tell a tale to the discerning of full and fierce tides in winter, when from every neighbouring wooded hill and from the remoter and barren mountains little tributaries add their plenteous contributions to make the sum-total of a mighty flood.

The Towy of prehistoric times deposited here the alluvial mud of these meadows, and the Towy of to-day often washes portions of it away again, as the appearance of its banks in summer time distinctly shows. There, on the other side, are the earthy clifflets it gnaws away; and here are the pebbles, the unpalatable remains, so to speak, left of its continual meals.

The imposing, castellated, triple-towered monument to Nelson, crowning a hill in Middleton Park, and looking almost as martial as the surrounding castles themselves, was erected by a former owner of the estate, Sir William Paxton, and, in an unexpected result, is a greater monument to himself, for to the country-folk it is "Paxton's Tower" rather than Nelson's.

The approach, along a right-hand turning, to Dryslwyn Castle is begun opposite the "Troed-rhiwcoch" inn, another of those Welsh compendiously descriptive words which to the "Saxon" look so clumsy, and often make such clumsy renderings into English. A Welshman, directed to look for an inn so named, would know exactly in what scenic surroundings to find it; but to an Englishman it means nothing. But, translated, it resolves itself into "Foot of Red Hill" inn,

and it will be observed by any who pass this way that a hill here slopes down to the road. If you care to inquire into the geology of that hill, you will find that its soil is red.

That is, in its hedgerow character, rather an English than a Welsh lane which leads to Dryslwyn. As you approach, it will be perceived that another hill closely neighbours that where the castle stands, helping to make with it a lovely picture. This is none other than the famous Grongar Hill, sung by the poet Dyer, born here in 1700:

> Grongar Hill invites my song,
> Draw the landscape bright and strong;
> Grongar, in whose mossy cells
> Sweetly musing Quiet dwells.

But the poet really sang, not of the hill, but of the view from it, and the hill and the view are far preferable to his over-praised verse, which continues:

> Ever charming, ever new!
> When will the landscape tire the view?

Ay, when? But that last atrocious line quite dispels our interest in any other remarks he has to make.

The hill of Dryslwyn, bare of all but a few occasional clumps of brushwood, is a striking contrast with that of Grongar, so beautifully wooded. It rises immediately from the farther

DRYSLWYN CASTLE.

shore of Towy, crossed here by a new stone bridge, and is crowned with a round tower and the few shattered walls of the old Rhys fortress. Looking at its strong but isolated position, we can successfully enter into the panic feelings of the garrison hastily thrown into it, upon the danger of Owain

LLANARTHNEY.

Glyndwr's raids being made apparent to the English. Other hastily collected garrisons, not so exposed, were in fear. The governor of Dynevor, discreet warrior that he was, thought it the better part to slip off under cover of night to the strong town of Brecon; and the soldiers of Dryslwyn, not allowing nice considerations to cool their heels,

went off at once, like many of their fellows elsewhere, in this manner spoiling another possible chapter of alarums and excursions in the Vale of Towy, and rendering Owain's progress, when he did come, little more than a processional triumph to Carmarthen.

Llanarthney nestles under the great hills of Middleton Park, a typical Welsh village; and is succeeded by a place somewhat importantly set down in the old road-books of the coaching age as "Bremendu." This is the large farm of Bremendâ, which, apart from being garrisoned by fierce geese that, hissing horribly, pursue the wayfarer down the road, seems to deserve no particular mention. But the geese are memorable in at least one traveller's experiences. Could they only be taught to bark, what excellent "house-dogs" they would make!

Passing Capel Dewi Isaf, or Lower St. David's Chapel, the road continues in extremely solitary and rural fashion, with charming views down across the river to Abergwili, where the Bishop's Palace and the Carmarthen Racecourse incongruously stand side by side. Between Llangunnor and Pensarn the way lies to Carmarthen through the hills, away from the Towy, here, as though loth to leave this pleasant vale, winding and turning back upon itself, in many loops. It is a lovely scene of wood, hill, vale, and water. Here, in Llangunnor Church, is a monument to Sir Richard Steele, less "Sir Richard" to us than the delightful literary essayist of the time of

Addison and the other great masters of the classic style. He lived here in retirement, and at his house in King Street, Carmarthen, where he died in 1729. He lies in St. Peter's Church, in the town. In later years his King Street house became the first "Ivy-Bush" inn, the forerunner of the greater "Ivy-Bush" hotel in Spilman Street.

XL

CARMARTHEN is finally disclosed when, making a last descent and skirting the semi-circular sweep of a wooded hill, it is seen, its clustered roof-tops all converging towards a dark and grim cresting structure partaking of both the character of a tower and that of a chimney. It is the tower of the County Gaol, which nests within the grey walls of the ancient castle, and thus, as at Haverfordwest and many another Welsh town, becomes, forbiddingly enough, the chief feature of the place.

You must cross the Towy to enter the town, doing so under the very shadow of those castle walls, and thence up the steepest of streets, on to the rather striking plateau on which it is planted.

The stranger looks upon the striking landmark of the County Goal with mixed feelings, and when a passing Welshman remarks that "it wass a ferry fine puilding," hazards the reply that

Carmarthenshire must needs be a lawless district to require such extensive prison accommodation. Rash stranger! for the Welshman is at once eager to argue the point. It seems, then, that Cardiff, Swansea, and Carmarthen Gaols are now the only ones remaining in use within South Wales, and that those of Haverfordwest, Cardigan, and Brecon are closed, for lack of business, as one may put it. And for whose detention are those now in use? Not for Welshmen, according to this local apologist: "You'll find, look you," said he, "that most of our prissons arre filled with Enklishmen and foreigners."

"Dangerous, then, for strangers to explore Wales? You commit them all to gaol, on sight?"

"If it wass not for the Enklishmen and the foreigners, we shoot close all our prissons. Yess, inteet; Wales iss the only nation that, look you, closes its prissons. We haf no use for them. The Welsh arre a ferry law-apiting people. Prissons," he added thoughtfully, "arre stranch places: all the prissoners in them arre Church of Enkland. You go through them and read their names and aiches, and what they arre there for, and their releechion, and they are all Church of Enkland. What iss the reasson of that?"

"Well, it looks as if the Church were a short cut to the Pit."

"No: the reasson iss that the gaol chaplains arre all Church of Enkland themselfs, and that if a prissoner says he iss the same he will pe petter

treatet. If he iss a Paptist, or a Methodist, and forswears hiss releechion, he ketts on petter with the chaplain."

Carmarthen (the "e" that used to appear in the first syllable, "Caer," has long been elided, for convenience' sake) has of course, being Welsh, a legendary history, as well as one of well-authenticated facts. It was the *Maridunum* of the Romans, and was placed at the junction of two great roads, the Via Julia Maritima and the Via Julia Montana, ascribed to Julius Frontinus, Governor of Britain, about A.D. 75. In legends Carmarthen is the birthplace of the great magician Merlin, from whose name, according to those stories, the town derives its own; "Caer Myrddin," in that view, signifying "Merlin's Town."

There is nothing magical, however, about the Carmarthen of to-day, and little that is removed above the dull and commonplace. Approaching the bridge, you come to the railway-station and the level-crossing, and if, instead of immediately crossing the river into the town, you wander a little way along the banks, you will receive a distant impression of grandeur that, although overlaid by the meanness of closer acquaintance, will never be altogether forgotten.

Carmarthen undoubtedly looks its best from this further bank of the river. From that kindly remove the hard outlines of the gaol take on an almost picturesque air, and the long, ancient bridge that (perhaps a little decrepit in these days) conducts into the town, across the broad

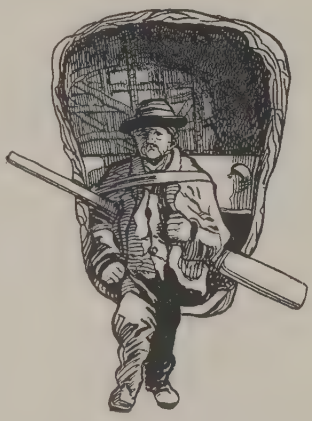
bosom of the Towy, comes boldly into view, backed by the misty hills of that delightful vale.

In the foreground of the picture of Carmarthen answering to this description will be noticed two strange-looking creatures, resembling to the imaginative a couple of highly indignant snails. These are two of those characteristic sights of Carmarthen and this salmon-stream of Towy, the coracle-men. Salt water flows up the Towy along the estuary from the sea, nine miles away, hence the appropriateness of the Celtic "Môrddin," or "sea fort," whence, and not from Merlin, the Roman name of *Maridunum* and the present name of Carmarthen really derive. Salmon-fishing is not likely to be overlooked by the stranger in the town who happens there during the season, for then the coracles are seen in fleets upon the broad waters, and the coracle-men themselves are encountered going home or setting forth, carrying their curious boats on their backs in the manner that so alarmed Mrs. Morgan in 1791, when, a stranger to such sights, she came on her travels to Carmarthen in the dusk of evening and thought she had fallen among the misshapen goblins and weird shapes of ancient Welsh story.

The coracle is the aboriginal boat, not only of Britain, but of all countries, and is, or was, the frail bark used by the North American Indians. Julius Cæsar, when he invaded Britain, saw them, and describes them as being made, very much as they are now, of wicker-work or strips of wood, covered with hide. Nowadays they are generally

CARMARTHEN.

covered with tarred canvas. They are built to carry one person only, who sits on a seat midway, and, using only one paddle, steers a sure and certain course possible only to those familiar with the coracle from their youth upwards. To embark a novice upon the Towy in one of these exaggerated walnut-shells and set him forth upon the stream would certainly result in his being spun round and round and being finally overset and drowned. Great, therefore, must have been the courage and religious enthusiasm of those early missionaries who, in coracles of somewhat larger build, embarked from Ireland and landed, after a seven days' voyage, in Cornwall and Wales.



CORACLE-MAN.

The rallying-point of Carmarthen's business activity is Nott's Square; not square, in cold matter of fact, but a most distinct triangle. In the centre of the roadway stands the bronze statue of General Nott, a native the town has delighted to honour for having been born here, and for his prowess at Ghuznee. It is by no means an imposing square, for the houses are, in common with most of those in Carmarthen, faced with stucco. But terrible deeds have been wrought in it, and here, on the site of this statue, where the market-

cross once stood, Dr. Robert Ferrar, Bishop of St. Davids, suffered for the faith that was in him, March 30th, 1555, in the Marian persecution. The entrance to the Castle, between two ancient and gloomy drum-towers, yet stands in a narrow alley off the Square, and, with a certain whimsical fitness, admits to the Police Station.

Carmarthen's streets have odd names. There are Dark Gate, where a gate no longer exists, Magazine Row, Blue Street, and Red Street, alike grey and pasty-faced with the prevailing stucco. Spilman Street, named after a former mayor, under whose reign it was constructed, is in appearance the best in the town. It conducts to that famed hostelry of coaching-days the "Ivy-Bush," which still, faced with yellow plaster as of yore, stands back from the street, in a court-yard of its own, its rear looking from pleasant gardens down upon the vale of Towy. It stands upon the summit of the old town walls, whose heavy masonry may even yet here and there be seen.

XLI

I HAVE said that the "Ivy-Bush" is famed. It was the birthplace, in 1782, of General Sir William Nott, whose father was the landlord at that time. Here, in 1797, was brought the French commander, General Tate, who had surrendered after his armed landing and opera-bouffe performances

at Fishguard. Patriotism was not then a discredited emotion, possibly because national dangers were so near and so real, and came keenly home to every one. At any rate, it effectually sank politeness, and Carmarthen people were—according to modern notions—shockingly rude to General Tate. He had to wash his distinguished but dirty hands at the pump, and, not being accorded even a jack-towel, had perforce to wipe them on his breeches. But, for my part, I prefer that treatment to the modern, and do not look with a kindly eye upon a Methuen who erects a monument to such an one as a Villebois-Marcuil.

Nelson stayed at the "Ivy Bush," and many another distinguished personage, for it was the chief house of the town. To and from it came and went the mails, and its general coaching and posting business was such that it had stabling for eighty horses. But all these things came to an end when those two successive blows fell—the opening of the South Wales Railway to Carmarthen, September 17th, 1851, and its extension to Haverfordwest, December 28th, 1853. Then the coaches ceased running, and, the posting business decaying, the stable hands and the postboys lost their occupation, even down to that ornament or relic of the establishment, the old postboy who, having lost his teeth and being reduced to mumbling, was generally known as "Bubbling Johnny."

The Gloucester and Carmarthen Mail, before and up to 1836, took 13 hours 59 minutes to

perform the down journey of 112 miles; practically a rate of eight miles an hour, inclusive of stops. From 1836 it was very considerably accelerated, doing that distance in 11 hours 50 minutes; a saving of no less than 2 hours 9 minutes, representing an increase of speed of more than one mile in every hour. The up-journey, however, was a lengthier affair, the gradients being less favourable in that direction, and prolonging the time by 1 hour 16 minutes at the earlier period, and 45 minutes at the later.

Arriving at the "Ivy-Bush," according to the period, at 11.29 p.m. or at 8 p.m., a halt was made for an hour and twenty minutes, and later for an hour and forty minutes, to await the coming of the down mail from Bristol through Cardiff and Swansea, carrying the Milford bags for that district and for Waterford and the South of Ireland. It then set out again, but as a degenerate affair of a three-horse, or "unicorn," team, under the title of the "Carmarthen and Milford Mail," and performed those final forty miles in about six and a half hours. But this last stretch was ever an uncertain affair, by reason of the incertitude attached to the arrival of the mail from Bristol and Swansea, greatly liable to delays arising from the crossing of the stormy estuary of the Severn between New Passage and Black Rock. Often the two mails would on that account arrive within a few minutes of each other, and occasionally the Bristol and Swansea would be so late that the unfortunate

THE "IVY-BUSH."

unicorn team of the Carmarthen and Milford would be flogged up and down those forty miles, in a desperate endeavour to catch the steam-packets setting out from Milford.

It was a very different matter with the up-journey from Milford to Carmarthen. For one thing, it was a daylight journey. They left that port generally about four o'clock in the afternoon, and did not hurry. The coachman and the guard owned between them a sporting rifle—whether it was a Joe Manton does not appear—and did a little rook shooting on the way. It is an almost incredibly hilly route, and picturesque tales of it were used to be told by frequenters of the "Ivy-Bush," by which it would appear that "the slipper" (*i.e.* the shoe, or drag) was put on so long, raised such friction, and became so hot that the guard was accustomed, when the coach arrived at the bottom of a hill, to fry bacon in it, for himself and the coachman. It was this guard who was so fat that he not only found a difficulty in getting into his seat, but had to carefully tuck his stomach in between his seat and the knees of the outsides, or to get those outsides to do it for him.

Branch mails left the "Ivy-Bush." Among them was one to Llanelly, of which an amusing anecdote is told. On one occasion, it seems, the coachman, flicking his leaders and starting them before a passenger was fairly on the top of the coach, caused him to fall into the road. That passenger was an Irishman, a Captain Boyd, who

brought an action and recovered damages against the proprietors. When the Captain looked over his lawyer's bill, he, to his surprise, found two items for consultations with a person named, respecting the case. As that person was a friend who had not been a witness, the Captain called upon him and asked what it meant, when it appeared that he recollected meeting the solicitor on two occasions, once at a dinner, and again in the street, when he casually asked, "How is my friend Boyd's case getting on?" Solicitors have ever been considered fair game.

A very wicked story is told of a commercial traveller in the old days at the "Ivy-Bush." Many tradesmen of the town used then to frequent the commercial-room of that hostelry in the evening, to have a few pleasant hours with the travellers. On one occasion the conversation turned upon the subject of national emblems, and many derivations of them were jocularly given. One traveller, however, without having due consideration of the part of the country in which he found himself, created an uproar by his jocular derivative of the wearing of the leek. "Many years ago," said he, "the mountains were greatly infested with monkeys, who used to burst into the villages at night and make much havoc, to the loss and terror of the inhabitants. A petition was sent to the King with the request that a regiment of soldiers might be sent to shoot the monkeys; but on the first night of these warlike operations," said our traveller, "the soldiers shot more Welsh-

men than monkeys. This was reported to the authorities, who, to prevent any further mistakes, ordered that every Welshman should wear a leek in his hat, as a necessary distinction."

It was an unfortunate joke, in the worst of taste, and singularly offensive to a choleric Welshman, who, even more than the typical Scot, "joks wi' deeficulty." The assembled Taffys arose in a fury, and would have done the joker a serious injury had not the other commercials interfered. They saw him to the back door, had his horse and gig round, and packed him off, for his own safety, to Haverfordwest at midnight. He never travelled that road again.

St. Peter's, in Priory Street, is the parish church. Within it is the great monument of that doughty Lancastrian, Sir Rhys ap Thomas, of Dynevor, who, hastening to aid the Earl of Richmond at his landing at Milford Haven, accompanied him on his march and helped him win the battle of Bosworth, where Richard III. was slain, and Richmond became Henry VII. Rhys is, indeed, said to have slain Richard with his own sword. He died in 1527, and lies here in effigy, beside his wife Eva, the Garter on his leg. The monument was restored in 1866 by his descendant, the fourth Baron Dynevor.

Does no one ever stop to consider that, despite the honours and consideration accorded him, Rhys was a traitor? The history of his family tells us that their bent was towards treachery, and it is no excuse for him that Richard III. was himself a

murderer and an usurper. Of such sort were generally the Kings of that age. Rhys is not commonly branded with those names, for the reason that the side he betrayed was unsuccessful, and his treason triumphed:

> Treason doth never prosper: what's the reason?
> If it do prosper, 'tis no longer treason.

On the chancel wall, with grotesque kneeling effigy, is the monument of Anne, Lady Vaughan, quaintly tricked out with verse:

> Kinde Reader Vnderneeth this Tombe doth Lye
> Choice Elixar of Mortalitie
> By Carefull prouidence Greate wealth did store
> For her Relations and the Poore
> In Essex borne But spent her Gainfull Dayes
> In Terra Coed to her Etrnall Prayse,
> Where by her Loanes in spite of Aduerse fates
> She did preserue Mens persons and Estates
> A Greate Exemplar to our Nation
> Her to imitate in Life and action
> Would you then know who was this good woman?
> 'Twas virtuous Anne, the Lady Vaughan
> She die^{d}. August the 15 Ann^{o}. 1672
> Being aged 84 yeares.

At some considerable distance along Priory Street the still flourishing remains of an ancient oak tree are noticeable. Very evident, in the way it is walled round and patched with concrete, is the concern felt for its well-being, and indeed it is the most cherished relic in the town. For sufficient reason, too, in the Welsh mind, because

to it belongs a hoary prophecy which, translated out of the vernacular, says:

When the oak falls down,
Then sinks the town.

Tradition says the old tree sprang from an acorn planted by one Adams, master of the local

THE OLD OAK, CARMARTHEN.

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, and ancestor of Adams, President of the United States. It would not be the shattered stump it is now had not some person accurst, curious, perhaps, to test the value of prophecy, seen fit, many years ago, to bore a hole in the trunk with an auger and to poison it with quicksilver or other injurious stuff. But the tree has survived, and, although shorn of its fair proportions, seems sufficiently healthy.

Carmarthen, in any case, is taking no unnecessary risks: it watches keenly after the welfare of its hostage to prosperity, and has sought, in case an evil day should befall, to ward off the stroke by providing an understudy, in the shape of the slim young oak sapling that, duly surrounded by an iron railing, stands beside its reverend elder. This, however, is the second sapling so planted here. Conceive the awe and dread that overshadowed the town when the first died, and the haste with which the Mayor planted another.

XLII

The brave old days of Carmarthen are gone and have left the old town dull and stale. Pity is the due of that stranger who shall come to Carmarthen on a wet day, and be obliged by circumstances to stay out that day; for it is behind the age, and has no place of entertainment, while, for instruction, you have but a "Literary Institute" remarkable for the absence of any books above the rank of out-of-date directories and hotel guides. The only other resorts are the railway-station and the hotel smoking-room, wherein the chief topic of conversation is apt to be the water-supply of the town. It does not, at the first blush, seem a subject likely to be provocative of heat; but when you become fully instructed on it, you will perceive that the heat generated is sufficient to convert the whole of that water-

supply into steam. Local powers of sarcasm and invective are brought up and thrive on this fertile source, and the newspapers exhibit a pretty wit in dealing with it from week to week. "This week," says one journal, "it has been coming through the pipes as brown as cold tea. It smells like a tanyard, and the taste is something like boiled mackintoshes." To which one can only reply by commiserating the burgesses of Carmarthen, and by opining that the siege in which that writer learned the taste of boiled mackintoshes must have been a severe one, and the garrison greatly reduced in foodstuffs.

The way out of Carmarthen lies along Lammas Street, where stands that fellow to the "Ivy Bush," the great "Boar's Head"; near it, in the centre of the road, the Crimean monument to the Welsh Fusiliers. At the extreme end of the street, where a few modern villas, well and handsomely built of stone, put the rest of Carmarthen to shame, islanded in the midst of the roadway, stands Picton's monument, a singularly ill-favoured, massive obelisk, replacing a more elaborate and even more hideous affair which was struck by lightning and demolished in 1846. General Sir Thomas Picton, of Picton Castle, near Haverfordwest, left Carmarthen, May 26th, 1815, to join the army at Brussels; going, as he expressed himself, to win "a coronet, or Westminster Abbey." He got neither, for, slain on the battle-field of Waterloo, he was buried, firstly, in the chapel of St. George's Cemetery, where this road

begins its course from London, and secondly and finally at St. Paul's Cathedral.

From this end of Carmarthen the milestones begin to register the distance to Hobbs Point, a place they have not hitherto mentioned. Who this Hobbs may have been is not revealed to the seeker after truth, but his Point is the quay upon Pembroke Dock. These milestones date from 1830, when, following some of the recommendations of Telford, the roads between Carmarthen and Pembroke Dock, and between Carmarthen and Milford were improved. The milestones now set out, not merely the miles, but add, with commendable particularity, the yards as well.

The Government had employed Telford in 1824 to make a survey of the road between Northleach and Milford, with a view to expediting the Irish mails, and the following year held an inquiry into his report and into the question of whether Old Milford, Neyland (now called New Milford), Nangle, or Pembroke Dock would be the better port for the packet-service. The whole very complicated question was sat upon and inquired into by a Select Committee, whose report was ordered by the House of Commons to be printed in 1827; and, so printed, forms, with the long-drawn evidence of many witnesses, a very bulky and formidable document indeed, full of the most egregious misprints of place-names, such as "Freecastle" for Trecastle, Tron Acton for Iron Acton, and Llandowerow for Llandowror.

Telford's report and examination before the

Committee consisted of several interesting proposals, which, if undertaken in their most drastic and complete shape, would have resulted in making a reduction of 10 miles 158 yards in the whole distance of 256½ miles between Tyburn Gate, London, and Milford, and would incidentally have made better running for the coaches by substituting easier gradients, instead of the frequent acute ones met with at different points. In addition, had the Post Office transferred the Gloucester mail from the Henley route to that by way of Uxbridge and Wycombe, a saving of another 3 miles 3 furlongs would have been effected; or, in other words, taking into consideration the better pace that would have been possible on the revised gradients, a gain of about three hours on the whole journey.

His most thoroughgoing proposals, over and above the general levelling, grading, and repairing of the way, were to strike out a new and direct line of road as between Highnam and Goodrich, passing through Mitcheldean and crossing the Wye by a new bridge. In this way the difficult climb up May Hill, and again out of the dingle at Lea, would have been avoided. So, too, would the town of Ross, whose neglect by the Post Office would have been a mistake, and would have saved but two miles. Again, by leaving out Monmouth and making direct for Abergavenny by Skenfrith, or by a place with the not altogether simple name of Llanvihangelysternllewern, another mile and a half might have been gained. Thus,

together with the making of a short deviation avoiding Llandilo, and minor cuts, the thing would have been done.

But, as a general scheme, it was never effected. Ross, as we have seen, made its own local improvement, and in the same way the road from Monmouth through Raglan was splendidly engineered. The crest of Bwlch Hill, too, had already been cut through. Here, in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, the counties and the Turnpike Trusts were eager to carry out the suggestions made, and did so, much to their sorrow; for, although they are splendid roads and a credit to those who made them, they never païd their way, but instead involved those authorities in very heavy loss.

The Government had hinted, not obscurely, that the line of mails for the south of Ireland might be brought direct by Oxford and Gloucester, instead of across the stormy passage of the Severn; and a large toll-revenue was expected; but it did not make that change, and passengers and mails both continued by the old route, so that the expected influx of traffic did not come this way. Then in a few more years the railways came, and what traffic there had been dwindled wholly away.

XLIII

The small and scattered suburb of Johnstown marks the very end of Carmarthen. From this point the traveller comes to the broad valley of the narrow little River Cowin. Across it you see the tiny village of Llanllwch, whose name is not so unpronounceable as it looks: "Thlanthlook" is the way of it. By the roadside here the old road-books of coaching-days give the inn of "Tavernplwcketh," but it would be sought in vain to-day, for it is now a private house, and another inn of that period, "Pwll-y-Gravel," three miles and a half onward, is now a farmstead. Midway of the two now comes Sarnau Station, a little way off the road. Here an old whitewashed toll-house, with quaint carpenter-Gothic windows, remains, and conducts to a row of similarly whitewashed cottages and a smithy called Banc-y-Felin, or, Englished, "Millbank." A horrible degeneracy spells it now "Bankyfelin."

"Sarnau" is, in Welsh, the plural of "causeway." The railway company, puzzled how to name a station situated some miles from anything so considerable as a village, apparently fastened on the notion of styling it "Causeways," because it stands not more than a mile distant from the point where the allied ancient roads, the Via Julia Montana and the Via Julia Maritima, having come to a junction at Carmarthen, go on together towards St. Davids, or *Menevia*, and leave the modern highway.

Henceforth we shall see no more of those classic roads, but their probable course may be briefly sketched. Passing northward of the neighbouring hill-fort of Castell-y-Gaer, the direction seems to be indicated by the place-name of Pen-yr-heol, or "Head of the Street," on the way to Mydrim. Thence by Caerllen, "Camp of the Legion," to Post Gwynne, where there are traces of a road, called by the Welsh "Fford Hen," or "Old Road," the direction is by Maesgwynne to Ambleston, Hay's Castle, Brawdy, and Whitchurch, whence St. Davids, the Roman *Menevia*, close to the rugged coast of the South Wales Ultima Thule, is distant only three miles.

Presently, resuming our route by Banc-y-Felin, a little beerhouse with the odd sign of the "Pass By"—which of course compels the inquisitive to stop and ask why that name—is seen, and then the terrible chapel of "Cana," dreadful, above most of its ugly and unashamed brethren, in its "compo" and hideous windows.

It is all very quiet and lonely in this valley. Houses are few and far between, and, by that same token, so are sheltering trees. Pity, then, the explorer who, overtaken by one of those frequent moist interludes that characterise the Welsh climate, is obliged hurriedly to take refuge in any roadside place that offers, lest he be soaked through before he knows it by the clouds of fine rain that descend, like driving smoke, from the mountains. A wayside smithy is then a palace, where, reckless of future rheumatism, you may

presently dry yourself before the forge and listen meanwhile, as a completely ignorant foreigner, to the jabbering of the Welshmen who shoe the horses, and the other Welshmen who bring them to be shod.

"Arrabarrayarragooroo!" (or something like it) says the most talkative.

"Aw," replies the listener.

"Yarramalloo!"

"Aw."

"Rhidycockalorumgooree!"

"Aw."

"Hokeypokeywinkeywum, cyffic gorlummy eisteddfoddau."

"Aw."

And so on, with much apparent heat on the one side and a drawling boredom on the other.

Again, the shelter may be, and generally is, an outhouse, inhabited by fowls, which, frightened by the intruder, set up a continual cackling and crowing, until you, thinking that another ten miles in the drifting rain would be preferable to that nerve-destroying din, set out once more to face the elements. Sometimes, before that course has been resolved upon, the cottager comes out to see what is the matter, and then the cowering tourist has dismal forebodings of being charged with attempted fowl-stealing. But the Welsh peasant, if he have little English at the tip of his tongue, has as much discernment as any one else, and can distinguish with half a glance between a forlorn traveller and a robber of hen-roosts. He

hospitably invites you within, and there, by the fire of the room that is at once kitchen, dining-room, drawing-room, and general living-apartment, you steam yourself partly dry, until the baby-girl, whose toilet is being made, begins to scream dolefully.

You ask what can be the matter, and her mother says, "She thinks you wants her"; so here you have been sitting, as mild as the mildest curate that ever lapped weak tea at a missionary meeting, and all the while that terrified infant has been picturing you as an ogre that satisfies his hunger on little Welsh girls. There is nothing for it but the road again, despite the kindly entreaties of the cottager to stay until it has cleared up.

XLIV

Thus, with varied traveller's fare, which is not always bread and cheese and kisses, the church of Llanvihangel Abercowin is approached, against the sky-line of a hill-top. The church, is said advisedly, for the village apparently does not exist. Abercowin, or as it used properly to be spelt, Abercywyn, means the confluence of the Cowin, or Cywyn, River with another—in this case the Tâf; and Vihangel is the Welsh way of indicating St. Michael the Archangel, to whom the church is dedicated.

At the end of the descent from this solitary,

and modern and uninteresting, church, and over a little river, the Dewi Fawr, comes St. Clears, or rather, that portion of it recognised by the Post Office as "Blue Boar." The old and original part of St. Clears lies past this roadside village and along a left-hand road which in about a mile arrives at the estuary and quays of the Tâf. This is generally known as Lower St. Clears, and Blue Boar as Upper, although, in the actual measurements of physical geography, the positions are reversed.

Blue Boar was a product of the coaching-age, and sprang up to provide travellers along the main road with the accommodation they would otherwise have been obliged to seek a mile out of their way. As may readily be suspected, its name derives from a coaching-inn; and the alternative name of "Mermaid," by which it was even more generally known in those coaching-times, arose in the same way. The "Mermaid" stands to this day, but unrecognisable; nor is the "Blue Boar" remarkable. Another house of that day, the "Red Cow," is in ruins, and the "Railway Hotel" and the "Swan" are now the most prominent.

St. Clears is a notable place in the later history of Wales, for it was in this district that the once famous Rebecca Riots originated, which swept away the toll-gates. This part of the country had long groaned under the exactions of the Turnpike Trusts, which were wastefully and extravagantly managed, and in their turn were obliged to make their imposts in order to defray

the expenses of maintaining the roads; but these now almost incredible exactions might have been indefinitely endured had it not been for a particularly unjust proceeding of the Whitland Trust, which applied the match to the smouldering resentment already existing, and taught the countryside the duty of forcible resistance.

The Whitland Trust was one that administered many miles of road in Carmarthenshire and Pembroke. It was, in 1839, like most of its brother-Trusts, in financial difficulties, and, like them, was always adding new burdens, in the shape of additional toll-gates and bars. But the particular enormity that caused the initial trouble was the erection of four new gates upon the road from here, through Whitland, to Maesgwynne—a rough road upon whose ruts the Trust had not expended a penny in repairs. "Mermaid" Gate was the first to be demolished by a furious crowd, who speedily wrecked the others. This was an isolated outbreak, and did not sufficiently impress the authorities, who reinstated their gates and increased them all over these districts. But in 1843 the resistance broke out afresh, and the movement found a name under which it spread like wild-fire. "Rebecca and her Daughters" charged themselves with the wholesale destruction of the toll-gates, and won the enthusiastic support of the peasantry. Five successive times was "Mermaid" Gate pulled down by them, and the same doings characterised most of the Welsh counties. Police were called down from London, and with the

military were sent to support the collection of turnpike-tolls, and yet the destruction and burning of the gates went on. It is a condition of affairs that reads like some half-forgotten page of history; but if Rebecca and her Daughters no longer terrorise the countryside, it is to the complete success of that agitation that modern popular campaigns against grievances in the established order of things are distinctly traceable. The success of determined combination then taught the Welsh a valuable lesson: hence the long series of Tithe Wars, coal and quarry strikes, and anti-Church Rate campaigns that since that day have disturbed Wales. Nor does it require a stretch of imagination to find in the lesson thus given the germ—the root-idea—whence sprang the larger, the more ferocious and threatening Land League and boycotting campaigns in Ireland. Had the Welsh been as murderous as the Irish, and shot landlords from behind hedges, who can doubt that in Wales also Land Courts and judicial rents would long since have resulted? Fear alone, the terror of hedgerow assassination and political revolt, has given the Irish tenant a position to which neither his industry nor his individual enterprise entitle him. Stripped of all redundancies and side-issues, the plain man may readily see this truth, and may pertinently ask why the Welshman, and much more why the English tenant, should not be given advantages similar to those wrung from an unwilling Government by Irish plotters and murderers.

Rebecca, as we have said, appeared in South Wales in 1843, in armed protest against an established order of things: against the network of turnpike-gates being formed along the roads and so closely around the villages that the peasant farmers could scarcely stir from their thresholds without encountering a demand for toll. Small and large farmers alike groaned under the tyranny of the numerous Turnpike Trusts, and often, by the time they had reached the market-towns, found the profits on the sale of their sheep, cattle, or produce entirely swallowed up by these imposts. Turnpike roads and toll-gates were, of course, no new things at that time; but it was an era when the gospel of good roads was being preached, and when many entirely new ways were being made, and old ones improved. Turnpike Trusts were created by scores, frequently overlapping one another, and were let by auction to speculators, who in "farming the tolls" sweated the uttermost farthing. So great was this imposition that the poorer peasants were being ruined in hundreds. The produce of the few acres they tilled for a hand-to-mouth livelihood often involved as much toll as its market value amounted to, and so was left to rot on the ground. In most parts of England it was generally recognised that payment at one gate would free the next one or two; but here, in the vampire Trusts of South Wales, this was exceptional, and although the gates were so numerous, payment was usually demanded at each one. It was, as

an instance, elicited before the Commission of Inquiry which sat at Carmarthen in 1843 to inquire into these and other grievances, that on the road where the Whitland Trust joined the Tavernspite Trust, at Robeston Wathen, people had to pay at Whitland Gate, Robeston Gate, and then at Canaston Gate—three gates within a mile and a quarter.

A spiritless peasantry might long have endured this injustice, but not the Welsh. Whence the movement sprang, or who originated it, was unknown; but Rebeccaism suddenly appeared, a mighty and mysterious power, untrammelled by geographical difficulties. With one hand Rebecca and her furies suddenly smote the toll-gates in South Wales, and with the other those in Montgomery and Radnor. This implied a preconcerted plan, but none was ever revealed. Some thought this a part of the Chartist agitation, but Chartism had a wider scope.

But whence the Scriptural name of these believers in physical force? Turn to the twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis, and read the sixtieth verse: "And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them."

The application of that verse to toll-gates was ingenious, if far-fetched, and it aroused wild enthusiasm. It is not known who first applied it: perhaps the writer of some leading article in the Welsh press; probably one of the many Calvinist

Methodist preachers, who then, as now, combined religion and politics in their exhortations. "Suggested by some ranter in a conventicle," bitterly says a contemporary. However that may be, Rebecca became instantly known, everywhere, and she and her daughters the terror of many a lonely toll-house.

It was generally at night when the obnoxious toll-gates were attacked—midnight for choice, when the pikeman had gone to bed, and the only sounds along the highway were the tu-whoos of the owls in the woods, or the barking of foxes in the coverts. All was still and undisturbed in the vicinity of the gate one moment; the next, a wild concert of horns and guns and the confused clattering of horses' hoofs disturbed the midnight air. The pikeman, putting his night-capped head out of window, saw a Comus rout of strange figures, and doubted the evidence of his eyes: a crowd of men (obviously and unmistakably men, although weirdly disguised), some dressed in women's skirts, some with nightshirts over their clothes, most with bonnets, linen sun-caps, and ringlets, all with faces blackened. A leader, similarly disguised and mounted on horseback, directed their movements. Scarce a word was uttered, but sledge-hammers, pickaxes, crowbars, and saws were magically produced, the gate-posts rooted up, the gates themselves torn down, and every piece of timber sawn neatly into billets useful enough for firewood, but useless for aught else. No parleying took place with the

pikeman at the doomed toll-house. He was sternly bidden come forth, and, with crowbars set to work, the building itself was in an incredibly short time reduced to a shapeless ruin. The sound of a horn, and the crew were off, disappearing as swiftly as they had come, leaving the pikeman by the roadside, guarding his personal

LLANDOWROR.

belongings—chest of drawers, "grandfather" clock, bedstead, chairs, and miscellaneous domestic gear—the disturbed owls resuming their calls, in mocking tones. Rebecca had done her work.

In order to pacify the disturbed Principality, the alarmed Government hastily issued a Commission empowered to inquire into the whole question. Evidence was taken, and enshrined in a Blue

Book of some five hundred folio pages. The practical outcome of it was the passing of the South Wales Turnpike Act, whose chief provision was that no toll-gate should be erected within seven miles of another, unless they "freed" one another. But that was by no means the only result. The success of the Rebecca Riots led directly to the exploitation of other grievances, such as Church Rates, Tithes, and Poor Law Administration; and demands were made that no Englishman should be appointed to Welsh official posts. Not all those things have been reformed, but that is not for lack of agitation, in season and out.

XLV

Two miles bring us from Blue Boar to Llandowror, an exceedingly Welsh village—Welsh-looking in its scenery, its white-washed cottages, built of heavy blocks of stone, and in its ancient church of St. Cringat. Welsh-speaking, too, for here they have exceptionally little English. An old woman, picturesquely Welsh, although, to be sure, she does not wear the Welsh costume, hobbles across the road, in the path of the explorer, and says, "Yechid da y chwi," which means "Good health to you," and requires the answer, if you can manage so much of the language, "Diolch y chwi" ("Thank you.") But the explorer does not always catch the purport of a foreign phrase, and

says, "I don't understand Welsh: I have only one language." "Ah! it iss ferry coot to haf two lankwaches, whateffer," she rejoins; and you agree.

"Llandowror," or the "Church of Two Waters," obtains that poetic name from the confluence here of the Tâf and the Hirwaun rivulet, close by the church itself, whose rude, defensible tower is of like pattern with all those we shall encounter between this and Milford. One may be a little larger, or taller, than another, but all are designed in the same stern simplicity, and built with similarly large stones, and few have any door or opening that could easily be reached from outside: all those characteristic touches pointing to their having been raised with an eye to their being a place of refuge in troublous times.

The old road goes steeply and roughly on to Tavernspite by Brandy Hill, whose name is an English corruption of the old Welsh Bron Dû, meaning "Black Slope"; and dark, wild, and forbidding is that greatly avoided way across the rugged and heathery uplands. It is left very much to itself since the splendidly graded three miles and a half rise up the romantic valley to Red Roses was made in 1830, as part of what the country-folk used to call "The Dockyard Road," to Pembroke Dock and Hobbs Point.

"Red Roses" got its appellation from a singular misunderstanding of the Welsh name of Rhôscochion, a name by which the two neighbouring farms of Rhôscoch and Rhôscoch Fach, signifying respectively "Red Moor" and "Little

Red Moor," were grouped together. The situation, on the plateau of a wild moor where the heather glows redly, is thus accurately described in the Welsh style; but when the "Dockyard Road" was made, straight onwards, and the inn that stands here for the accommodation of travellers was built, the surveyors, mostly Englishmen, who did not understand Welsh, christened the place by the name it now bears. They had tried, without success, to get a translation of the name they heard, and, being rather dunderheaded, and, anyway, considering that a new-found English name was better than a guttural and incomprehensible old Welsh one, invented this, without question, very pretty variant. "Rhôs," they heard the Welshmen pronounce "rose," and adopted it without translating; "coch" they found to mean "red," and the termination "ion" they discovered to be the plural form: so there, on this plan, you have "Red Roses" ready-made.

The inn standing here, neighboured by a smithy and some half-dozen cottages, is the "Llwyngwair Arms," obtaining that name from the property being owned by the Bowens of Llwyngwair, in Cardiganshire. It looks directly across the moor, and faces midway upon where the road goes on to Pembroke Dock, and where our way, turning sharply to the right, makes across a mile and a half of lonely heath to Tavernspite. It is still in some respects a rather primitive road, and has two sudden and stony watercourses cut across it, very dangerous to

travellers after dark. This mile and a half marked in the old days an exceptionally virtuous and public-spirited action of the Carmarthenshire Main Trust, which, although it was not included in their Act, and therefore could not be brought under toll, kept it in repair.

Tavernspite is a grim, mal-avised place whose appearance is so far removed from ordinary con-

TAVERNSPITE.

ceptions of beauty or of comfort, with so forbidding and inhospitable an air of past prosperity and present decay, that it reaches a picturesqueness of its own. This, too, was a creation of the coaching-age—a settlement planted on this lone and bleak hilltop, far from the habitations of men, somewhere about 1791, when most of the roads in this district were brought out of their original track-like condition, and first turnpiked. Tavernspite,

whose name is compacted of a corruption of the two Welsh words, "Tafarn" and "Yspytty," meaning an inn, and a place of rest—or, as they would say in Switzerland, on the Great St. Bernard Pass, a "hospice"—was very much of a place of refuge for frost-numbed and exhausted travellers in times gone by. It is technically in the parish of Cyffic, but practically self-contained and wholly isolated; and although situated at a very Willesden Junction-like meeting-place of roads, sees nowadays very few passers-by.

The place was absolutely barricaded with turnpike gates in the heyday of such things, and a deserted old toll-house stands as, in some sort, a reminder of the past. The inn, a great, gaunt, grey, barrack-like building, with never any pretensions to comeliness, still remains, and keeps its old title of the "Plume of Feathers"; but the belated wayfarer, ignorant of where he shall lay his head, shudders at the forlorn look of it, and hastes, in the gathering darkness, elsewhere, past this wan collection of twenty or thirty cottages, mostly empty, with ragged roofs and broken windows.

XLVI

It is at this point that Pembrokeshire is entered. From hence a continuation of rugged ups and downs leads on to Narberth, past a hamlet where a newer Tavernspite is trying its

luck, and then down into the pretty wooded dingle of Llanrhead, where the road bends and brings you to the deeper, more picturesque, and more heavily wooded glen of Llangwithnor, where an old walled farm looks like a fortress in the dusk of evening, putting on a disappointing air of comparative commonplace in the staring eye of

COLD BLOW.

day. What you took, over-night, for a baron's hold turns out to be a cow-byre; and the battlemented buildings of eld that loomed so threateningly under the trees against the last streak of light in the evening sky are but outhouses and hayricks.

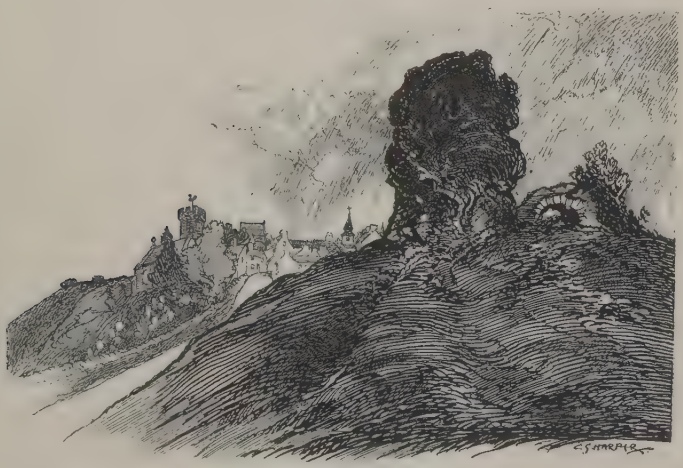
Now comes the hamlet of Prince's Gate, with

neat modern church, all very prosperous and pleasing, sprung up where a solitary toll-gate used to stand. Following upon it is Cold Blow, not so pleasant, and no doubt, being high-placed on a hilltop, as cold in winter as its shivery name would seem to indicate. But in summer it is just as insufferably hot, and the miserable cottages of which the one hard-featured street is composed have their slated roofs whitewashed, in an attempt to keep the rooms cool. The population of Cold Blow are black in the face, down at the heel, and ragged of coat. The women are slatterns, the men loungers, and most of them, like colliers everywhere, have a dog—exploratory, suspicious, and snarling dogs, investigatory of the stranger's legs, and wishful to bite. Cold Blow is on the fringe of the anthracite coalfields of the district, where the Begelly and Stepaside pits send forth a large output, going chiefly to Bass's brewery at Burton-on-Trent.

From Cold Blow Narberth is visible; but to reach it a very steep hill has first to be descended, and then the corresponding rise of what, with great justice, is called Narberth Mountain has to be negotiated.

Narberth, afar off, looks like some City of Palaces: close at hand, it is revealed as a miserable little ash-coloured townlet, whose houses are worse than commonplace, and never by any chance rise superior to a hideous, soulless, box-like squareness, encased with dirty-looking plaster. From the Town Hall to the "De Rutzen Hotel," through

the whole range of the hateful place, plaster, probably mixed originally with soot, runs rampant. It is by far the beastliest place on the whole course of this road through South Wales, and is, in addition, ditchwater-dull. The modern Welshman has no sense of the beautiful—nor of the ugly. His touch-stone is utility, and his dreadful creed of Calvinistic Methodism debases



NARBERTH.

the idea of Heaven itself. His land is a land of richness, but his ideas are threadbare and poverty-stricken; and although he may enthusiastically quote his bards on Cambria's mountains, he does not, as a farmer, appreciate rocks, and looks with a cold eye upon fields set on edge, at an angle of from forty-five to fifty degrees.

The appalling monotony and ugliness of Nar-

berth fortunately are borne upon the consciousness of the stranger only by easy gradations. The staircase-like climb up to it is picturesque, and is overhung on the one side by the church, and on the other by the ruins of the castle, built by Sir Andrew Perrott in the time of Henry I., and garrisoned by him with Flemings. It was captured by Llewelyn ap Grufydd, Prince of North Wales, in 1257; but was afterwards repaired, and was in good condition when Henry VII. gave it to his trusty Sir Rhys ap Thomas, of Dynevor. A "praty pile of old Sir Rees," Leland styled it, and those massive walls came through even the Cromwellian period with so little injury that they were occupied quite fifty years later. Now they consist of but one roofless, ivy-covered tower and a number of shapeless walls, cresting a steep grassy mound.

It is when beyond this point, and on the hill-top where the town stands, that the hopeless ugliness of the place first becomes evident, and its dulness, too, unless indeed you happen upon Narberth on that day, once a month, when the Pig Fair is held, and then it is all porcine squeals and the mingled English and Welsh cursing of the drovers.

Narberth is in Pembrokeshire, that "Little England beyond Wales" which still very generally maintains the character it has owned ever since the twelfth century, when the Welsh were thrust out of it by the Norman adventurers encouraged by the descendants of William the

Conqueror, and kept out in perpetuity by the Flamands encouraged by Henry I. to settle here out of the Low Countries. Narberth is, however, very largely Welsh. Although actually some six miles within Pembrokeshire, it stands, as it were, in a kind of neutral march, and here the antipathetic racial streams, if they do not mix, do run side by side. Here, in the past, oil and water would as readily have mixed as those two peoples; but recent years have sufficed to do that for which long centuries were not enough, and Carmarthenshire folks now more rarely call the Pembrokers—as we may style them—the "down-belows" than, with much contempt, they were wont to do. It is true, however, that the writer of this has heard the Pembrokeshire people described by a Welshman as "mongrels," or as his tongue fashioned the word, "monchrels."

The place-names—those unfailing tests—begin, as Narberth is left behind, to mirror this long-standing foreign occupation, as the Welsh would call it; English names at first alternating with Welsh, and finally, by the time Haverfordwest has been reached, reigning alone. They are almost exclusive by names ending with "ton," such as Haroldston, Johnston, Herbrandston, Robeston, and Steynton, and mark, more clearly than anything else, that ancient racial cleavage. They derive from the owners of lordships held from the Norman de Clares and other Earls of Pembroke, the knightly Herbrands and others, who have thus replaced and utterly obliterated the original Welsh

names of those places, once superseded, and now utterly forgot.

In this isolated province of England a stray Welshman, asked if he is not Welsh, will in all likelihood reply, defensively, that he is, and is not ashamed to own it—a sure sign of a stranger in a strange land.

XLVII

From the extreme west end of Narberth one of the punctilious milestones of this road declares it to be 9 miles 780 yards to Haverfordwest. Up goes the highway to the untidy village of Robeston Wathen, and then down again to the woods of Slebech at the crossing of the little East Cleddau River, where the small stone bridge stands, recalling the thunders of the Post Office in the old mail-coach days. The older bridge then standing here was in such a crazy condition and so narrow that the Postmaster-General was continually threatening to indict it; but the county, responsible for it, adopted an attitude of magnificent unconcern, and wholly disregarded those thunders, confident that the lightnings were not dangerous. One fears to think what might have happened in the end, had not the bridge itself brought a conclusion to the controversy by falling into the stream, fortunately not while the coach was passing over it. Then it had, of course, to be rebuilt.

On the bald crest of the succeeding hill, where

the Mid County turnpike-gate once stood, and where there is but a solitary house, the large and highly elaborate modern church of Slebech stands. It was built about 1848 by the then Baron de Rutzen, to replace the old and dilapidated Norman chapel then standing beside the

ROBESTON WATHEN.

Slebech Creek of Milford Haven, and is a singularly pretentious and unsuccessful attempt to copy the Early English style of architecture. Pity it was not built down there among the woods, where it could not be so closely seen. A lavish outlay of money went to the building and

furnishing of it, and to the glorification of the De Rutzens, whose carpeted pew, like a miniature drawing-room, and whose monumental display quite throw into the shade the poor old broken-nosed effigy that belonged to Slebech centuries before a now dead-and-gone de Rutzen came over from Germany, and, marrying the heiress of Nathaniel Philipps, Lord of the Manor of Slebech, settled down as an English squire.

The long, steep, and straight descent of Arnold's Hill leads down to a little rivulet in the hollow of Deeplake Bridge, where lodge gates bar the way to Picton Castle, two miles within the Park. This also has long been a seat of the Philipps family, who have held it since the time of Richard III., and still reside here. It is a lengthy tenure, but that is a small thing compared with the statement that this Norman castle, built in the reign of Rufus by William de Picton, still remaining inhabited, and only altered so far as to make it comfortable to modern ideas, has been "never forfeited, never injured, and never vacant" in all the eight hundred years that have since rolled by. But those alterations for comfort's sake are sufficient to make an antiquary rave with horror, for nice modern sash-windows have been inserted under the semi-circular Norman arches, and the whole of the exterior is covered with the ubiquitous plaster in which all South Wales wallows.

Scurry Hill is the last that bars the way into Haverfordwest, whose name, life being short and those syllables many, is for convenience' sake

shortened to "Harfordwest." Descending, and passing the railway-station and outlying houses, the town is presently disclosed, occupying an extremely steep hill on the farther side of the West Cleddau River.

Haverfordwest—you would look in vain upon the map for "Haverfordeast"—is considered to have obtained the "fiord" in its name from the Danish pirates who in the tenth century harried these coasts, and, penetrating the many creeks of Milford Haven, were struck by the resemblance they bore to the fiords of their own country. But the Welsh name of the town was Hwlffordd, and as the termination in that instance means precisely the same as our own "ford," the reader is free to choose for himself, according to taste and fancy, resting quite sure that, whichever choice he makes, there can, in the nature of things, be none who will, with authority, be able to say him nay. We may, however, bearing in mind that Milford Haven, that long and winding arm of the sea, with many branches, bays, roadsteads, and creeks, is a true brother to the Scandinavian fiords, and received its name from those Danish adventurers, come to the conclusion that "Haverfordwest" derives from its being situated on the westerly branch of the two final and most inland ramifications of this sea-salt waterway. The eastern of these two is the Slebech Creek, the so-called East Cleddau River; the western is the West Cleddau. There is no town or settlement of any kind on the East Cleddau where, just below Canaston Bridge,

the salt water ends, where the waters of the real fresh-water stream properly so-called, come down out of North Pembrokeshire, and where a Haverfordeast might conceivably have arisen; but at the inland extremity of the salt estuary of the West Cleddau the town of Haverfordwest is planted, and we may assume that from this position its name arose. It is quite possible, and even probable, that among those adventurous Danes, come hazardously across the sea in their long, snake-like, black galleys, there were Icelanders from Hafnafjord, a village in that island, and that this Haverford was named by them in remembrance of their native home.

But, even so, we have by no means exhausted the possibilities of place-names at Haverfordwest, for the town has occasionally been referred to by the Welsh, in that descriptive way which admits of so great a choice of variants, as "Aberfford," and "Aberdaugleddau"—aliases referring to the two branches of the Cleddau River.

Two bridges conduct over the Cartlet tributary and the West Cleddau into the town, where the waterway just begins to be navigable for small sailing-vessels and barges. One bridge is old, the other new, and immediately across them rise the steep and chiefly narrow streets, where the tall houses are closely huddled together, rising one above the other, and closely hemming in the ancient castle in a fashion resembling the crowding together of the tall "lands" in the old town of Edinburgh. On this side of the Cleddau some few

remains of the town walls and bastions are yet to be seen, and, together with the yonder height, where the stout flint and rubble walls of the castle frown down upon the navigable river, give a very keen impression of the town's ancient strength. It *was* strong, and had every occasion and obligation to be, and that man who built it—Gilbert de Clare, first Earl of Pembroke—was a strong man, sent out in these parts to take what he could from the Welsh, and to hold it with all his might. The King, with that generosity so characteristic of the Norman sovereigns, gave de Clare as much as he could grab of what was not his to give, and thus arose that "Little England over Sea" we now call Pembrokeshire. Landing at Milford Haven with a mixed expeditionary force of Norman knights, English men-at-arms, and Flemish settlers, he not only took with the sword and by the same means kept what he had taken, but peopled with an alien race the districts he and his minor lords had conquered. In Stephen's reign this castle first arose, and was held under de Clare by one of his feudal knights, Richard FitzTancred. Then, in the course of time, the de Clares passed away, and the Marischals held the Earldom of Pembroke in their stead, and ever the English settlement in this remote corner spread and increased. Even the great Glyndwr, in the time of Henry IV., aided by his French allies, who landed in the Haven and with him besieged the Castle of Haverfordwest, could do no more than burn the town and retire discomfited. The Welsh never

succeeded in regaining what had been snatched from them, and the Red Dragon banner was never destined to flaunt from the battlements of this stronghold, nor from those of any of the others which de Clare and his successors and their feudatories had built so numerously in the lands they had won.

The castle could have called a halt to the Earl of Richmond's advance in 1485 had Sir Rhys ap Thomas been true to his trust, and only at last, in 1648, failed to keep town and district for the King because Sir John Stepney and his garrison were too faint-hearted to hold it. The waning fortunes of the cause shook their small courage, and when summoned to surrender, they did so with a shameless alacrity, leaving behind them all their provisions and munitions of war. Then the Parliament blew the castle up with gunpowder; and now, after all those honourable traditions, its massive shell is degraded to the ignoble use of the County Gaol.

XLVIII

Let us enter the town properly, over the old bridge, as did the coaches. It is the more picturesque way. Disregarding the beggars with which the town swarms, one can learn a great deal about the history of this bridge by halting midway of its still narrow course and reading the lengthy inscription set up by the Mayor and

HAVERFORDWEST.

Corporation. It is surmounted by a rampant lion, and narrates:

> This Bridge was Erected at the sole Expence of Sr John Philipps of Picton Caftle Bart Anno 1726 Michael Prust Esqr Mayor: In Memory whereof This was Set up by The Mayor and Corporation A.D. 1829 in the 10th Year of the Reign of His Majesty George the Fourth who Passed over this Bridge on his return from Ireland the 13th day of September 1821
>
> THIS BRIDGE
>
> was widened and repaired, in the year 1848, under the direction of the magistrates, of the county of the town of Haverfordwest, at the expense of the said county.

Wonderful!

The "Blue Boar," the "Castle," and the "Swan" were in those times the chief houses of the town; and here they may still be found, the "Swan" immediately across the bridge, in Swan Square. Thence, by Holloway, North Street, and Barn Street, the way lies up and up, and up again, and then, when arrived at a prodigious altitude, down it swoops to Merlin's, or Maudlin, Bridge. Was this, one wonders, the spot where Rhys ap Thomas so easily salved his conscience? Traditions tell how he did it, but do not specify the actual place. Yet bridges on the way between Milford and Haverfordwest are scarce, and so this might easily have been the scene. The way of it was this. Sir Rhys had sworn loyalty to Richard III., and clinched it by saying that any person ill-affected to the State daring to land where he had power "must resolve to make his

entry and irruption over his belly." In a little while his allegiance wavered, and when that Welshman, Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, landed with an armed force in the Haven, his political, and still more his racial, sympathies went out to him, and, instead of opposing the invasion, he aided and countenanced it. Rustic legends long told the farcical story how, to make good his old undertaking, he lay on his back beneath a bridge early on Richmond's line of march, and thus in childish fashion kept his pledge to the word, though not to the spirit.

At Merlin's Bridge there is a fork in the road, the left-hand going to our terminus at Old Milford, the right-hand leading to Hubberston Hakin. That to this last-named place is the original way down to the Haven, and the left-hand road is the entirely new way made under the Act of 1791 for providing a direct mail route between Haverfordwest and the town of Milford, then being called into existence out of nothingness by the enterprise of the Honourable Charles Fulke Greville. He had begun operations there in 1790, and the following year obtained his Act for making six miles of road where no road had existed before, and for erecting three turnpike gates and taking tolls. This Milford Trust was to all intents and purposes a private road, for Greville raised the money, and, as landlord of the newly rising town and port, was by far the most likely to benefit by it.

It is a particularly hilly route. Dredgman

Hill, where one of the three toll-gates stood, succeeds to Merlin's Bridge, and in its turn is followed by Toch Hill and Pope Hill, where "Horeb" Chapel affronts the sight. Thus the highway goes switchbacking to the shores of the Haven, punctuated by Freystrop Colliery. Freystrop village lies to the left, by the waterside, its name, like the few remaining Norse names of this district, a relic of the Danish raids and early

JOHNSTON.

colonising of the tenth century. The first syllable points to its dedication to Freyr, in Norse mythology the god of sunshine and of rain, great giver of harvests, peace, and plenty; the second, identical with the termination "thorpe," meaning "village," common in many parts of England, but hardly to be found elsewhere in this nook of Pembrokeshire, would seem to point to that people having established an important settlement at this point.

Now comes the pretty interlude of Johnston, a village where an extravagantly slender church tower shoots up from its churchyard, beside a woodland by-road of a peculiar richness and beauty. The district is a small coalfield where soft anthracite coal of the mixed and inferior quality usually called culm, of which "briquettes" are made, is found, amid the harder variety.

Then comes Steynton, with its own slim tower, actually used in the Civil War, which even this remote corner could not escape, as a fort where twenty musketeers were lodged, to form a garrison.

A curious incident of those times has been preserved. There was then living on his estate of Bolton Hill, in this parish, one Bolton, who, as a person of Royalist sympathies, was keenly suspected of aiding the cause he affected, and accordingly two soldiers were sent to arrest him. His presence in the house was denied by his wife, but one of the soldiers, who must have been well versed in the judicial methods ascribed to Solomon in the Bible, seized her baby, and threatened to throw it on the fire, with such a show of meaning what he said that Bolton sprang out from his hiding-place, and slew the man on the spot. The other fled, and Bolton, left to think the affair over, came to the conclusion that his better course was to go to Haverfordwest, where Cromwell lay, and give his version of the affair. He did so, and described the man, with the happy result that

Cromwell told him he did no more than might have been expected of any one, adding, "The fellow was a great rascal, and you have saved me the trouble of having him executed."

Steynton is but a mile and a half distant from Milford, which stands in this parish, or did so stand until Milford was erected into an ecclesiastical parish by itself. The road now makes a

STEYNTON.

swift ending. With another downward plunge it rises once more, and then, entering the outskirts of Milford, takes a stiff header for the waters of the Haven, shining there, two miles broad, directly in your path, with the bare hills frowning from the other side. Down there is Milford Church, and the masts of ships spire upwards. Are you, you wonder, to end by an involuntary and fully clothed bath? No; at what seems the very verge

roads and streets open on the right, and there, along the hillside, parallel with the water and with each other, are the three streets of which Milford is chiefly composed.

XLIX

Milford Haven has been a famous harbour ever since history began. The Danes landed and established themselves along the "Middle Fiord" about A.D. 987; it was the base whence the Earl of Pembroke and his Flemings advanced to the occupation of the hinterland, in the time of Henry I.; and from its shores Henry II. set out in 1172 for Ireland, to receive the homage of the Irish chieftains whom the great Strongbow had conquered. In 1399 Richard II. sailed hence, untroubled, for Ireland, returning to find the crown already tottering on his head. His cousin, Henry of Bolingbroke, was in England, bent upon his overthrow, and already, on the morning after he had landed, Richard found that thousands of the men he had brought back with him from Ireland had deserted. Left thus, he stole away, in the disguise of a Franciscan monk, to Conway, to be captured at Flint Castle, and eventually murdered in the dungeons of Pontefract.

The next great event was the hostile landing of the twelve thousand French troops, come to aid Owain Glyndwr, in 1405, followed by their return whence they had come. Eighty years

later the forlorn expedition of the Earl of Richmond, come to wrest the throne from Richard III., anchored here, and, met with the unexpected allegiance and aid of Rhys ap Thomas, marched to that victory on Bosworth Field which, in the quick-presto space of a fortnight, enabled the Earl of Richmond to become Henry VII. It seems, after all those stirring events, a ridiculous anti-

APPROACH TO MILFORD.

climax to say that here, in September, 1821, George IV. landed from Ireland; but that was evidently not the view of those who, with frothy loyalty, erected the tablet, six foot high, on Milford Quay, recording the marvellous thing.

> Tell me how Wales was made so happy as
> To inherit such a haven,

demands Imogen, in *Cymbeline*. We cannot say; but, after the manner of Topsy, in *Uncle Tom's*

Cabin, "'spect it growed." It inherited the Haven, as a matter of course, from Nature; and a very magnificent inheritance it would be if only the Admiralty and other authorities valued it at its worth. But this, the finest natural harbour in the Three Kingdoms, and one of the finest in the world, has never been properly appreciated; and although there have been times when its due recognition seemed at hand, the mood has not lasted long, and Milford never in its best days became more than a third-rate port.

Milford Haven in its greatest length, from the open sea at St. Ann's Head to the farther extremity of Slebech Creek, measures sixteen miles. Everywhere deep-water channels and safe anchorages, sheltered within the lee of the enfolding hills, abound, and here even all the great modern navies of the world might ride in still water. The great castles of Haverfordwest, Pembroke, and Carew, and the minor ones of Picton, Dale, and Upton, placed at the head of different creeks, bear witness to how keenly our ancestors felt the necessity of fortifying this easy entrance into the country against any likely invader; and to-day the greater and lesser forts of Hubberston, the Stack Rock, South Hook, West Blockhouse, Scoveston, and others, although now mostly obsolete, show that, forty years ago, the War Office and the Admiralty, although agreed to ignore the capabilities of the Haven, were not wholly unmindful of their possible appreciation by an enemy.

It can scarce be said that the scenery of this many-branched inlet is, as a whole, picturesque. The hills that swoop down to it are bare and treeless, and on that account not a little forbidding; but the sheltered bights, or "pills," as they are called, where the sea-water comes quietly lapping into little coves, and rivulets trickle from the hills down deep gullies, are often thickly overhung with trees and wrapped in a sub-tropical heat.

There was a time, at the opening of the war with the American colonies, when the development of all these natural advantages seemed assured. The Government resolved to form a dockyard at Neyland, now to be identified with the town of New Milford, five miles farther inland than where Old Milford now stands, and, purchasing lands for forts and batteries, built two frigates there; the *Milford* and the *Prince of Wales*, of seventy-four guns. Then, after £20,000 had been expended, the place was abandoned for this now "Old Milford," then rising, as it were at the bidding of a magician, from this bare hillside.

The land was, toward the close of the eighteenth century, the property of Sir William Hamilton, the friend of Nelson. Hamilton, who died in 1803, and lies in Milford Church, was, in consequence of his diplomatic appointments abroad, quite unable to direct the fortunes of his property, and thus to all intents and purposes made it over to his nephew and heir, Charles Fulke Greville, who, with a keen eye to the possibilities of the

place, and probably, armed as he was by Nelson's opinion of Milford Haven as the finest harbour in the world, with some unavowed support from the Government of the day, determined to develop the property.

He accordingly obtained a private Act of Parliament in 1790, authorising Hamilton and his assigns to establish markets, make roads, construct quays and docks, and to fit the spot for a station whence the mails could be conveyed to Waterford.

No time was lost in carrying these powers into effect. The first structure to arise was the inn, the "Lord Nelson Hotel." It is still standing; and you may yet see the room that was the ballroom where Nelson and Lady Hamilton danced. Meanwhile, the sun of Government favour was setting upon Neyland, and Lord Spencer had in 1801 evolved a plan for erecting a dockyard here. The Greville projects therefore took on a very prosperous look. A station for the Newfoundland fishery was projected, in addition, and the earliest settlers in the new town were families brought from the island of Nantucket, North America, to help establish that fishery on a sound basis. Among those families were the Starbucks and Rotchs, still represented at Milford, although the particular fishery for whose benefit they were imported has decayed.

The Milford Haven and Waterford Post Office packet service, established in April, 1787, in continuation of the two mail-coach routes *via*

Gloucester and Bristol, was then transferred from Neyland to the quays of the new town. At that time the Post Office packet-boats were five in number: sailing vessels of eighty tons burthen, conveying the mails across the ninety-two miles between Waterford—or, rather, Dunnose—and Milford six days a week; the passage averaging seventeen hours, but always very uncertain and often interrupted by stormy weather. This service from its first year yielded a profit of £1,200 on the passengers conveyed, but the mails were carried at a loss.

It was no light matter at that time to adventure on the voyage between Milford and Waterford, for although the average thus returned by the Post Office made no bad showing, under those old sailing conditions, there were occasions when the unhappy traveller was kept several days on the raging main. Those were the primitive days when stewards were unknown and dinners not thought of; nor, had those meals been provided, does it seem at all likely that the wretched passengers would have required them. They often arrived at this miserable seaport after thirty-five hours' continuous coach-travelling, only to find that the time of sailing depended largely on winds and weather, and by no means wholly on the tide-table. They might be able to rest at the "Lord Nelson" or the "Dragon," or, on the other hand, might, with all the weariness of those many hours on them, be required immediately to go aboard. In that case they generally took with

them a basket of provisions for the voyage, supplied at an exorbitant rate by the innkeepers, who thus, whether the travellers stayed or whether they went forward at once, secured their profit. The bottle of brandy—an invariable accompaniment of each basket—was charged one guinea.

Memories of Milford were not in those days, as may well be supposed, roseate, and there were many travellers from London and from Bristol who preferred to cross over to the South of Ireland from Bristol itself, where, although that made a long sea-voyage of two hundred and twenty miles, they had the advantages of larger vessels.

The town of Milford meanwhile continued to grow rapidly. What it is now, it became then; for later vicissitudes have stopped its growth. It could never become a seaside resort, for it is six miles or more from the open sea, and, moreover, there is no public access to the foreshore in front of the town, occupied as it is with docks and sidings, fish stores, and other unlovely commercial objects.

Then were those three long parallel streets, each a third of a mile in length, laid out, terraced one above the other, facing the broad Haven: Hamilton Terrace below, Charles Street a degree more elevated, and Robert Street higher still. These are intersected by short, steep connecting streets, including Fulke Street, or "Dragon Hill," as it is called locally, from the "Dragon" inn being here. It was only in recent years that Mrs. Vaughan, widow of the proprietor of this old

coaching-hostelry, died, aged ninety, about the same time as Hulbert, one of the coachmen of the mail, died in Haverfordwest Workhouse.

L

St. Catherine's Church, like everything else at Milford, is a creation of Greville's very own. The foundation-stone was laid by Nelson when staying on a visit to Sir William Hamilton, and the building was completed in 1808. Showing to the outside view a rather curious than beautiful attempt to build a Gothic place of worship of brick and plaster, the interior comes as a wholly unexpected shock, being, apart from the barbarous design, coloured in an eye-searing combination of livid pink and arsenical green. A fragment of the mainmast of the French ship *L'Orient*, blown up at the Battle of the Nile, is preserved here, together with a very ugly Egyptian vase of red porphyry, intended to be used for baptising the young of Milford, but on second thoughts considered too heathenish. It bears a set of verses inscribed to Nelson by the omnipotent and ubiquitous Greville :

Horatio Vice-Comiti Nelson, Duci de Brontë Cenotaphium Posuit.—C. F. G.

NELSON !

Mourn thee not, tho' short thy day,
Circled by Glory's brightest ray,
Thy giant course was run ;

Laurels, and palms, and heaven-born smiles
Of victory, cheer'd thy matchless toils,
And bless'd thy setting sun.

If mighty nations' hosts subdued,
If midst the wasteful scene of blood
Fair deeds of fame were wrought,
If grateful Britain's joint acclaim,
If the world's echo of thy fame
Be bliss, I mourn thee not.

Thy deeds shall veteran valour speak,
And beardless youth, with kindling cheek
Burn at the wond'rous tale;
Thy fame shall piety review,
And as she bids the sea-worn crew
Ennobling virtues hail,

Record, in conquest's dazzling hour,
Thy homage to that unseen Pow'r
By Whom the fight is won;
Thy manly look on threat'ning death,
Thy prayer with calm expiring breath,
"O God, Thy will be done!"

Had the prosperity of Milford continued, the church, instead of as now, being at the east end of it, would, according to Greville's plans, have been in the centre; but Fortune and Governments are fickle, and when the favour of the Admiralty first, and secondly that of the Post Office, was withdrawn, the place decayed, and the plans for an eastward extension of the town were abandoned.

The first blow fell in 1814, when the Dockyard was removed higher up the Haven to Hobbs' Point and what was then the little village of Pater, now grown into the busy town of Pembroke

Dock, near the ancient and somnolent town of Pembroke. It was a heavy stroke of fate; but still the mail-coaches came to Milford, and still the packets set out from it for Ireland, while the Newfoundland trade and the whaling industry continued to make it their port. But the loss of the dockyard was only the beginning of a disastrous time. In 1826 and 1827 the Post

MILFORD.

Office procured a Governmental inquiry into the condition of the mail-roads through South Wales, which disclosed the fact that Pembroke Dock had already grown to be a larger and much more important place than Milford, and deserving of the first consideration. It was shown that a new landing-place for the packet-boats, more convenient than that of Milford, was necessary. There was not sufficient depth of water opposite the

town for coming inshore and embarking and landing the mails at all stages of the tides, and the anchorage was not sufficiently sheltered. To construct a landing-place at the sheltered point of Newton Nose, near Black Bridge, would have cost £52,127, and the remodelling of the road to it from St. Clears, avoiding the hills of Narberth, and thus reducing the summit-level from over 600 feet to 288 feet above sea-level, would have cost £39,836 more. The alternative of making Hakin the packet-station would, owing to the flatness of the shore and the necessity for longer piers, have involved an outlay of £107,408; and a proposal to select Nangle, on the opposite shore of the Haven, and near the open sea, fell through owing to its unsheltered position and shallow waters. But by making a new road from St. Clears, through Red Roses and Begelly, the distance to Pembroke Dock would be reduced by five miles, and recommendations were made that this road should be constructed, and the mails transferred from Milford.

Changes, however, come slowly when they have to trickle through the Government tap, and this was not yet to take place.

In the interval between the removal of the Dockyard and the holding of the inquiry a change had come over the service between this and Waterford, for the sailing-vessels had been replaced, April 15th, 1824, by four steamships of eighty horse-power, which performed the voyage in an average time of twelve hours. It was a con-

siderable improvement; but complaints were still made of irregularity and uncertainty, and it was said that privately owned steamers were more powerful and reliable than those of the Post Office; and, at any rate, now steam was generally introduced, the Bristol and Waterford long voyage was more than ever preferred, for, even though it occupied from twenty-four to twenty-six hours, it was more certain, and generally saved three hours over the combined coach and steamer route by Swansea and Milford. The prevalent irregularity of the packets, even under steam, is illustrated by the statement made before the Commission that although the postage of a letter between London and Waterford by the roundabout route through Holyhead and Dublin was as much as 1*s.* 11*d.*, the merchants of that place were well content to pay it and to ensure regularity, rather than have their correspondence directed *viâ* Milford at 1*s.* 2*d.* a letter, and lose in time more than what they saved in pence.

To illustrate the advance in steam-power since then, it need only be instanced that the Great Western mail-steamers of the present day, leaving the pier at New Milford, make the passage to Waterford, nine miles farther than Dunnose, the old place of call, in 6 hours 10 minutes—little more than half the time occupied on the somewhat shorter journey by the small vessels of the twenties.

The mails were at last removed to Hobbs' Point about 1843, to be transferred to Neyland

when the South Wales Railway was opened to that place, which has now for ever dropped its proper name and is known as New Milford.

The disastrous effect of these mischances is apparent in the account given of Milford by Thomas Roscoe, who visited it in 1854, and describes how there appeared to be a stagnation of everything like trade. "Inquiringly as I looked about me, I could not catch the sight of a single trader belonging to the place. A 'visitor' has a strange sound to the Milford people: he is looked upon as a foreigner, whose now and then appearance serves to keep alive public curiosity; this is particularly the case with the innkeeper, who holds the hotel, I understood, without paying any rent, solely to keep it from falling into decay. Poor man! Nothing can exceed the disconsolate air of his establishment; and his only gratifying reflection is in a retrospect of former times, and the mournful consolation that "it was not always so."

Happily the blighted town has somewhat recovered from the abject state thus described, and although it does not expand, the houses that were long shut up and tenantless are once again occupied. It is now under the direction of the Milford Haven Railway and Estate Company, a commercial undertaking formed to take over the property mortgaged by the Greville family, who, when these strokes of ill-fortune befel the place they had called out of nothingness, could not pay the interest on the borrowed money that had gone

to create it. It is the railway that brings some measure of business here, for it encourages the fisheries. One hundred and twenty tons of fish leave Milford daily by rail for inland towns, and minor industries contribute their share towards keeping money in circulation. Sometimes a battleship or cruiser comes in, and then five or six hundred men are probably let loose in the town, greatly to the profit of its tradespeople, who might well pray, "Give us this day our daily man-o'-war." Then the publicans keep open during illegal hours, and, summoned by the police, excuse themselves by saying that, with all those hundreds of sailors in the streets, their doors, if locked, would be broken open. Justice, in such a terrible dilemma, is usually met with a *pro formâ* fine of a shilling; and the publicans, for their part, are quite content to pay that small percentage on their profits. So Box—and Cox—are satisfied!

LI

The sheltered nature of the surrounding inlets is well proved by the flourishing condition of the escallonia shrub, whose pink, wax-like blossoms are a familiar sight. The yellow iris and many beautiful wild-flowers grow down in the saltings of Hakin and Kunjik, and in the marshes below Hubberston Point, where Fort Hubberston frowns so sternly from its rocky footings and impresses the uninstructed with its strength. It looks

grim, with those massive brick and masonry walls and those casemates; but experts tell you that, although built only in 1862, it is obsolete, and that although, like a toy pug-dog, it is sufficiently ugly, it is comparatively inoffensive. It is the same story with the islanded circular iron fort out yonder.

To the east of Milford the romantic gully of Black Bridge and Pill Creek cuts directly across the way to Walterston and Neyland. It is a rugged path by whose boulderous course you

FORT HUBBERSTON.

scramble down to this inlet, where at low tide a little rivulet meanders down a beautifully wooded valley through a generous margin of mud. At its outlet to the Haven there stands the deserted railway of some derelict works, whose long pier is a feature in many views from Milford town. It, with an equally deserted range of sheds, underlines the story of Milford's varied misfortunes.

Crossing this picturesque nook by a crazy plank bridge, and climbing up on the other side, the hamlet of Walterston leads next to Llanstad-

BLACK BRIDGE AND PILL CREEK.

well, where the little church, fellow in appearance to so many others in Pembrokeshire, stands with its churchyard wall rising from the beach, its stones hung with seaweed that is awash with every tide. Across the water you see the dockyard of Pembroke, with its great sheds where the cruisers and battleships are built, rigged, or

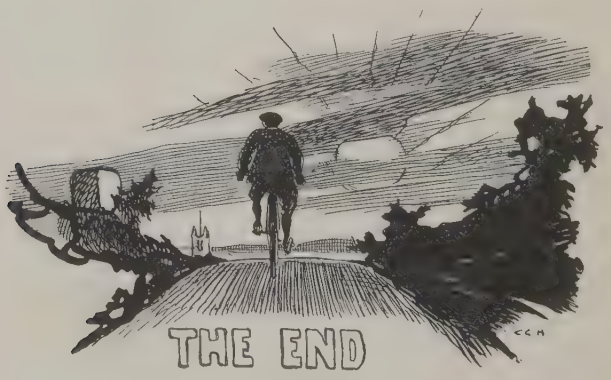
LLANSTADWELL.

repaired; and much hammering and blowing of steam hooters comes across the fairway. It does not compare favourably for size with others of our Royal Dockyards, but it is as noisy as its bigger brethren.

Next comes Neyland, or, as the railway company—sponsor now of places, in lieu of the old Norman knights who once exercised that privi-

lege—elects to call it, "New Milford." There at present is the terminus of the long and by no means straight line of railway communication that brings the South of Ireland mail down from London in two hundred and sixty-nine and a quarter miles; but the loom of time is weaving a newer web, and ere long the railway and the mail-packet establishment will have partly deserted this Haven, much troubled by so many changes of fortune. The Fishguard Railway and docks, now constructing, will change the point of departure of at least a portion of the mail-boat service, and another chapter be begun in the story of the communications with Ireland.

And here I end. As the coachmen in days of old said, coming to the conclusion of their stage, "I goes no further!"



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Printed and bound by Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ld., London and Aylesbury.